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SELECTED POEMS OF  
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EDITED FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS BY

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# SELECTED POEMS OF ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON



## INTRODUCTION

It is seldom in the history of literature that a poet has been at once so inevitable a result and so characteristic an expression of an age as was Alfred Tennyson. Shakespeare's men and women, Wordsworth's primrose, Shelley's skylark, are timeless; Keats's Grecian urn, though, like the Elgin marbles, transported to England, remains Greek; but Tennyson's Ulysses, his Lotos-Eaters, his King Arthur, are not in their essence classical or mediæval or Renaissance; they are Victorian. When Tennyson turned to the Greeks for material, he turned, not as the artists of the early Renaissance, striving for a moment to *be* Greek, but with a full consciousness that he and his characters were unmistakably English.

The nineteenth century was a period of extraordinary contrasts — greatness and pettiness, idealism and common sense, unconsciousness and self-consciousness, poetry and philosophy, visions of the future and memories of the past. The result of the conflict was, in almost every case, compromise, and it is compromise which gives the key to the spirit of the century, and to Tennyson. It has become the fashion — natural in an age of reaction — to criticize the age of Victoria, and Tennyson with his age. Much of that criticism is deserved and wholesome; but with it there goes frequently a misunderstanding of what constituted the Victorian contribution and what explains the Victorian compromise. For an understanding of the reasons for that compromise, one must look to the age immediately preceding the age of Victoria — the first part of the century, the age of Revolution and the Romantic Revolt. This had been the period of the breaking-down of standards, of the change from convention-

alism to individualism, from the rule of intellect to that of emotion, from aristocracy to democracy, from artificiality to naturalness, and, by an easy transition, to Nature, and from authority to liberty — and license. The period was marked most of all by a new idealism, whether by that term we refer to Wordsworth's "light that never was," to Shelley's ethereal skylark, to Keats's magic casements, to the government of Pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehanna, or to the watchwords of the French Revolution. It was during the revolutionary period that Tennyson was born; and it is entirely significant, not only of him, but of many of the Englishmen whose poet he was, that his boyhood home was so remote from the activities of the time that his memory of it should have been

"Gray twilight pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace."

In that secluded place, the Rectory of Somersby in Lincolnshire, which, Tennyson's son says, "caught only the dim echoes of the storm, that 'world-earthquake Waterloo,'" Tennyson was born August 6, 1809. That was the year which saw the birth of so many men of note with many of whom Tennyson was associated throughout his life: William Ewart Gladstone, Charles Darwin, Edward Fitzgerald, Monckton Milnes; in America, Abraham Lincoln, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Edgar Allan Poe. Tennyson's boyhood was spent almost entirely in the secluded place in which he was born; for a short time he went to school at Louth, but, disliking the constraint, he returned to the best teacher he ever had, his father, who was a good scholar, something of a poet, painter, and musician, and a man of extraordinary influence over his large family of sons and daughters. With summers spent by the sea at Mablethorpe, and long winters of reading and studying with his brothers and sisters, Tennyson passed his placid youth, as yet entirely unconscious of the upheaval in the world without.

In 1815, with the Treaty of Vienna, the revolutionary period came to an end. The second period of the century, from 1815 to 1850, was a time of reconstruction. England did not

feel the actual effects of the revolutionary period as did France, but the result was there in taxes, in unemployment, in general unrest, and in the usual critical reaction from war, with its consequent agitation against the Government. But the fundamental cause for unrest lay still deeper. Gradually but inevitably England was changing from an agricultural country to the manufacturing country of the present; where before had been farms grew up factories; machinery was taking the place of human labor; the gradual development of steam power was affecting commerce and transportation. The change which this brought about in the attitude of people in general Tennyson caught in his two *Northern Farmers* — the first, the farmer of his father's time, even of Tennyson's own boyhood, with his unreasoning and unquestioning allegiance to Squire, to State, to Church, who always had voted "right," and who never had been against the "raäte," dying with the knowledge that he had done his duty — and that he had "stubb'd Thurnaby waäste"; the other with his

"Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillings and pence? Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere."

For forty years there was peace in England — an almost unprecedented situation; and with that peace went a cry for "progress" and multitudes of attempts at reform. In 1824 occurred the reform of the penal code, for the first time a real effort to "make the punishment fit the crime," followed in 1828 by an act of religious toleration, by which Dissenters were given all rights of members of the Church of England except the right of seats in Parliament, and in 1829 by the Catholic Emancipation. In 1832 was passed the Reform Bill, the important thing about which was not so much its attempt at equality of suffrage, as the fact that it was forced upon a reluctant House of Commons, an obstinate House of Lords, and a King who would have refused to sign it if he had had the power, by a people who for the first time realized that they did have the power. In 1833 slavery was abolished in British possessions in the West Indies and in South Africa. In the same year a factory act to some slight extent limited the employment and the labor of children, while in 1834 occurred the reform of the Poor Law which had been established in the time of Elizabeth. In 1838, the year after the

accession of Victoria, the first steamboat crossed the ocean, and by 1848 telegraph communication had become a matter of course. The efforts of the Anti-Corn-Law League, from 1838 to 1846, finally brought about the abolition of the duty on wheat. Between 1846 and 1849 occurred the introduction of free trade in the removal of the protective duties on over two hundred articles which had formerly been taxed.

Such were the outstanding events of the period of reconstruction. The significance of the events and of the spirit of the second period of the nineteenth century may be found in the life and work of Tennyson. After his placid boyhood in the country, he matriculated at Cambridge in 1828. At first he was lonely and disappointed in university life; he wrote to his aunt: "The country is so disgustingly level, the revelry of the place so monotonous, the studies of the University so uninteresting, so much matter of fact. None but dry-headed, calculating, angular little gentlemen can take much delight in A plus B." He soon became a part of the University, however, and particularly a part of a group of young men known as the *Apostles*, a band said to be "waxing daily in religion and radicalism," among whom were numbered most of the best minds of the day, who debated on politics, and discussed religion and metaphysics.

". . . we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art  
And labor, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land."

Intellectually, it was an extraordinary group which that period brought together at Cambridge — Thackeray, Arthur Hallam, Richard Trench, John Sterling, Edward Fitzgerald, Monckton Milnes, James Spedding, John Mitchell Kemble, Frederick Denison Maurice. Cambridge was at that time a peculiarly fortunate home for a poet; it was the center of the English enthusiasm for Wordsworth, and there Hallam and some of his friends resurrected the almost forgotten *Adonais* and inaugurated a youthful and wholesome idolatry of Shelley and Keats. The change which the period caused in Tennyson is marked. Before he had matriculated at the University, he had published, with his brother, a little volume called *Poems by Two Brothers* in which the

influence of Byron is, not unnaturally, to be traced throughout. In 1829 the Chancellor's Medal was awarded to Tennyson for his poem *Timbuctoo*, a piece of work which to-day seems youthful enough, but which his own contemporaries hailed as "certainly equal to most parts of Milton." In 1830 appeared the first volume of Tennyson's real work, *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*. Immature as much of the work in this volume is, illustrating chiefly the conventional diction and still more conventional point of view of another generation, there are touches in it which show that a new poet was to be reckoned with, and that that poet was awake to the life and the ideas around about him. There is much of Keats in the volume, as there is much of Keats in all that Tennyson afterwards wrote — his sensuousness, his delight in pictures, his love of beauty. It is true that there was a passion in Keats's love which Tennyson was never to feel, but the change from Byron to Keats was epoch-making for Tennyson the poet. In this volume, artificial as much of it still is, excitement is between the lines; not the excitement of war, but of the conflicting ideas of peace. It is typical of Tennyson, as representative of a large group of Englishmen, that he should — and could — have written the sonnet *To Buonaparte*, with its complacent acceptance of England as the "island queen who sways the floods and lands from Ind to Ind," and its boastful cry, "We taught him!" as he was later to write of the whole revolutionary period as "the schoolboy heat, the blind hysterics of the Celt." It is equally characteristic of Tennyson that he should have written *The Poet*.

In 1833 appeared a volume of poems which no longer merely prophesied the future. It is necessary only to recall some of the titles which were contained in the *Poems of 1833*: *The Lady of Shalott*, *Ænone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *A Dream of Fair Women*. The poet in Tennyson had found himself. Then came a silence of ten years, the formative period of Tennyson's life and character. At the death of his father he took upon himself the responsibilities of the head of the family; he lost his friend Arthur Hallam; he met Emily Sellwood, with whom his marriage was to be delayed for years because of the financial troubles of the Tennyson family. Then in 1842 he produced *English Idyls and Other Poems*, the high-water mark of his poetic ability. To the

average reader, this volume is Tennyson — the Tennyson of *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Dora*, *Tithonus*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sir Galahad*, and "Break, break, break." Nothing which Tennyson wrote later excelled this volume.

A civil pension, secured by his friends, enabled Tennyson to struggle through a period of financial trouble, and in 1847 to publish *The Princess*, his "herald melody" of the higher education of women, which by some was scoffed at, by some accepted as a revelation of the future. In 1850 appeared *In Memoriam*, which marked the turning-point of Tennyson's life, as the turning-point of the century. It made him, after a long period of care and trouble and sorrow, the recognized poet of England, the poet laureate, the possessor of an income sufficient to allow his marriage. If that year was not actually the beginning of a downward tendency in Tennyson, it at least marked the highest point in his development. There are lines and stanzas — even an occasional short poem — in the work which followed which equal what he had already produced; there is nothing which excels it. Having represented and expressed the great age of Victorian reconstruction and progress, Tennyson now became the representative and expression of the great age of Victorian doubt and confusion.

The significance of the change which came about in the background of the years which followed 1850 is to be found in Tennyson's poetry of that period. The revolutionary period had been a time of enthusiastic prophecy and of great idealism, ending in a treaty which was a compromise. The second age had been one of great accomplishment. England had put into practice the theories of the age before and the result was evident in all those various reforms which have been mentioned. With Tennyson, England had called Bonaparte a "madman" who had "thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak"; England was unconquered, and unconquerable by external power. England had exhibited great "progress" — that word which rings through the literature of the second period like a trumpet call. In Tennyson's *Ulysses* we may find the spirit of this second period. His Ulysses is no longer the travel-worn Odysseus of Homer, asking no more of the gods than a swift return to his rocky island, upon whom, the prophet said, death from the sea should very

gently come and cut him off, bowed down with years, around him a prosperous people; he is a young-old Ulysses, who having experienced much must experience more, who found the world too small and time too short for his accomplishment,

“ . . . yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star  
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought.”

The men of the middle years of the century were like Ulysses, “strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”; like him, too, in their belief that they were ultimately unconquerable. Supplementary to *Ulysses* as a picture of the age of reconstruction and vision is the earlier *Locksley Hall*. Here again the speaker is indomitable youth — for Tennyson’s Ulysses, though as old as Homer, is as young as Falstaff. Leaving aside the love story of *Locksley Hall*, the reader sees that (for all Tennyson’s denial of any intention to include himself in his works) the poem is a portrait of Tennyson and his contemporaries,

“ . . . nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time.  
When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;  
When I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.”

It is Tennyson and his contemporaries who cried out to “the wondrous Mother Age,” and who yearned for the “large excitement that the coming years would yield.” Most significant of all, there runs through this age like a refrain, expressed by Tennyson and the score of others who were writing, that line which, in many different ways, is the secret of the third period of the century: “The individual withers and the world is more and more.” As the emphasis in the revolutionary period had been upon the liberation of the individual, so the cry of the later years was for “the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.”

In 1850 England might have boasted that she had accomplished the task of putting into practice the theories of the Revolution. Liberty — had not the Reform Bill, which extended the suffrage, been passed for and by the people? Fra-

ternity — they called it *humanitarianism*, but it showed itself in the reform of the Poor Laws and the penal code, in the beginnings of the limitation of child labor and in a new conception of the position of women and children. Equality — religious principles no longer barred a man from participation in the privileges of a nation by whose laws he was ruled. But, together with the cry of “the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be,” there was another note in the literature and thought of the time which was heard occasionally, though for the most part drowned in the song of triumph. Among the *Poems of 1833* Tennyson had included *The Lotos-Eaters*, originally only the natural reverse of the mood of *Ulysses*, the lassitude in contrast with the energy of man. In the edition of 1842 *The Lotos-Eaters* was greatly emended, and one of those emendations is significant:

“Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;  
 ’Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There *is* confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labor unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars,  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars.”

The watchwords of the Revolution had been exclamations: Liberty! Fraternity! Equality! In the period of reconstruction, they became statements; ideals though they were, they were nevertheless realizable on earth, and England had realized them. But from 1850 on, the words are neither exclamations nor statements; they have become questions. Liberty? Is there a liberty which is compatible with law? Fraternity? Can it be reconciled with competition? Equality? How can we believe it possible, surrounded as we are by individual and racial differences? Ideals, become actualities, cease to be ideals. Once more, as in the time of the Treaty of Vienna, England found herself face to face with *compromise*.

Thus the third period of the century became a time of doubt, of questioning, of skepticism, varying in degree from the agnosticism of Huxley to the new faith of the Oxford

**Movement.** Tennyson had ended his epilogue to *Morte d'Arthur* in the *Poems of 1842* with a dream:

“ . . . all the people cried,  
‘Arthur is come again; he cannot die.’  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated — ‘Come again, and thrice as fair’;  
And, further inland, voices echo’d — ‘Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.’  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke.”

In 1854 the long peace came to an end, when England was drawn into the Crimean War, and in 1857 Indian subjects rose in the Sepoy Rebellion. During the next years, England was seldom without petty outbreaks among her possessions. The Civil War in America, also, threatened for a time to engage England, and in the background still, but growing continually more pressing, was the perennial Irish question. The “reforms” of the second period continued, but in place of the glowing fervor of that age there was a dogged determination. It was not the mere memory of the triumph of “equality” in the first Reform Bill which brought about the passage of the second in 1867, but a remembrance of the sullen murmuring of the people and of the riots. Though the second Reform Bill extended the suffrage, it was still a compromise, still far from real equality. In 1870 with the establishment of the Government schools, England approached the problem of the democratization of education. Two other events stand out in the period, so epoch-making that they may be classed with the more strictly historical occurrences: the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* in 1859 and of Newman’s *Apologia pro Vita Sua* in 1864.

The literature of the third period, vast in bulk and various in material, differs radically from the literature of the first period; there is nothing here to recall the days of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. It is perhaps significant that the writers of this third period were not young men, but men of mature age and thought, who, having lived through other periods, other times, who having, with Ulysses, experienced much, set themselves to explain the meaning and relation of the things which they had experienced. This is not the lit-

erature of imagination, but the literature of thought. There is little of "the first fine careless rapture" here; but there is much of the most mature, most thoughtful writing which England has produced. All of it — poetry, politics, history, criticism, novel, drama, philosophy — has one common characteristic — that "high seriousness" which is never far from the thinking and writing of Englishmen. Even the laughter in the third period is usually the laughter of satire or the laughter of reaction.

Throughout the literature of the period, certain fundamental problems appear again and again, treated now by historians and statesmen, now by theologians, again by dramatists and novelists, again even by poets. First among them is the problem of *democracy*. After generations of trials, England had become, to all practical purposes, a democracy, but there was still a king. It was not only political democracy with which the third period was concerned, however; there went, hand in hand with that, the problems of democracy in literature and in education. Secondly, England was faced, as the result of the industrial expansion and the increase in the number of wage-earners, with a serious *economic* problem. With it, a natural concomitant, went a new *social* problem; class tradition in England had been upset; the aristocracy was recruiting new members from the wealthier middle class; the line of demarcation between middle and lower class was becoming vague. Wealth had come to mean more; family, birth and breeding, less. There was a profound change, too, in the relation of the individual to the whole — to Society, as it had come to be known, and the capitalization is significant. Most troublesome of all to many was the *scientific* problem. With the discovery of Columbus, man had come to be a part of a world; with the discovery of Copernicus, he had come to be a part of worlds; with the discovery of Darwin, he came to be a part of æons. His relation to the universe had changed from a spatial to a temporal one. His belief in chance had become a recognition of order. The discoveries of geology, anthropology, biology, had made him, indeed, the "glory, jest, and riddle of the world." As a result of the scientific theories of the day, man was offered a logical explanation of the universe — and realized that logic alone is not enough for man. He had explained the world,

he had explained man, he had explained away the necessity for God. Thus there arose, most profound of all, a *religious* problem. The question of man politically, socially, economically, scientifically, was as nothing in comparison with the question of man eternally. Yet each of these problems resulted only in compromise. England was a democracy — but a democracy with a king; England had invented time-saving machinery, and had gained a lessened regard for the human being; there was a vast number of new wage-earners, and a lower value of the wage; there was a new aristocracy, made up from wealth; a new society which was made up of individuals, and which was denying individualism; an increased knowledge of the past with an increasing doubt of the future; a growing belief that man was but an animal in a natural world, and a growing faith that he was a demigod in a supernatural world; a logical proof that there was no need for a God, and an exalted faith that there was a God greater than the God of the past.

At the turning year of the century Tennyson published *In Memoriam*. Its reception by the English people shows conclusively its significance in the thought of the time; this was the first of all Tennyson's publications which was received by all classes of people alike as great, and it was the poem which placed its author at once in the foremost ranks of English writers of the time. Published entirely without advertisement, without even the name of the author and with only the initials of the subject, it became, within an incredibly short space of time, the most read work in all England. No single work of the century more completely expresses the confusion of the years which produced it, the combination of greatness and littleness, the new doubt, and the new attempt to work out of that doubt a new faith. In 1833 Arthur Hallam had died suddenly at Vienna.

“Clouds and darkness  
Closed about Camelot;  
Arthur had vanish'd,  
I knew not whither,  
The King who loved me . . .”

Thus Tennyson wrote more than fifty years later. The relation between Hallam and Tennyson has become one of the

great classic friendships of literature, has indeed passed into a tradition. They were fellow students at Cambridge; they had read and talked and thought together:

“We glanced from theme to theme,  
Discussed the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream,”

said Tennyson in *In Memoriam*. It was an unusual and splendid sympathy which existed between two unusual young men. Tennyson characterized Hallam thus:

“Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

“Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course.”

There was an association between them other than that of their great friendship; during one of the many vacations which Hallam spent with the Tennysons — described by Tennyson in *In Memoriam* — he had become engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily; it was shortly before the time set for their marriage that he died. Tennyson's first great sorrow at Hallam's death was expressed in short poems. In *The Two Voices* — originally called *Thoughts of a Suicide* — he shows an intense depression which amounted to melancholia. The deep seriousness of the tone of *Tithonus*, *Lucetius*, *Morte d'Arthur* — even so early as this Tennyson found himself thinking of the two Arthurs almost interchangeably — and the grief of the two lovely lyrics, “*O that 'twere possible*” — out of which later grew *Maud*, — and “*Break, break, break,*” are the direct expression of the change in Tennyson.

Tennyson himself said that *Ulysses* is in many ways the earlier expression of *In Memoriam*; written when the longer poem was barely begun, it gave more simply, he said, “the need of going forward, of braving the difficulties of life.” Be-

cause it gave his feeling more simply, it gave it also more perfectly, for Tennyson, no one can doubt, was at his best in short poems. In his longer works there is too much repetition, too much conscious striving for "the height of the great argument"; and there is also grave danger that at some place in his longer poems Tennyson will utterly contradict himself. From the point of view of the twentieth century, there is much in *In Memoriam* so obvious as to be trite, but it was not obvious when Tennyson wrote it; its science, in its own day startling, has become antiquated; its religion no longer satisfies; its conclusion seems to us but a compromise. Yet in its own day it came to the age as a revelation of itself. Scientists, statesmen, theologians alike accepted it as the ultimate statement of the religious attitude of modern man. At a time when the warfare of science and religion seemed most destructive, it was Tennyson's greatness that he could show the possibility of accepting the one without rejecting the other. To understand *In Memoriam*, we must read it with the eyes of its own generation.

The criticism is made that after 1850 the thinker in Tennyson conquered the poet. That is hardly true. The thinker in Tennyson was never great enough to conquer the poet. Undoubtedly, however, we do feel in the works after 1850 a tendency to talk, even to lecture, which we resent, for Tennyson was essentially a lyric poet. *In Memoriam* was followed by *Maud*, Tennyson's "little Hamlet, the history of a morbid poetic soul under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age," which the English people heartily disliked — possibly because it was a picture of an extreme, though hardly rare, type of Englishman of the period; and then by the *Idylls of the King*, which of all Tennyson's works was the most generally popular, possibly because it was an expression of an equally extreme, but much rarer, Englishman — the ideal. "My meaning in the *Idylls of the King*," Tennyson said, "was spiritual. . . . Arthur was allegorical to me. I intended to represent him as the Ideal of the soul of man coming in contact with the warring elements of the flesh." It is that tendency to allegorize on the part of Tennyson and the other poets of the period which is one of the weaknesses of the age; it is the self-conscious expression of self-conscious ideals. If one will see how far the allegorist

has overcome the poet, let him compare the *Idylls of the King* with *The Lady of Shalott*, which is one of its stories in the earliest form. *The Lady of Shalott* may be made to mean much or little; it is enough that it is poetry.

It is in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* that we can see most definitely what seemed to Tennyson the change which had come over the world — for England was his world. Though Tennyson here, as in the case of the earlier poem, warned his readers that his dramatic poems were not to be considered autobiographical, he was the first to realize that in any poem an author reveals something of himself; in a self-conscious age he is likely to reveal more than he realizes at the time. Tennyson himself acknowledged that the lines about the “dead sailor son,”

“Truth, for Truth is Truth he worshipt, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow’d, yet he look’d beyond the  
grave,”

were written at the time of the death of his own son Lionel. It is inevitable, then, that we should read a personal reminiscence also into such lines as:

“Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro’ age and slow diseases, gone as all the world must go.”

In place of the impetuous youth of the earlier *Locksley Hall*, with his “Vision of the world and all the wonders that would be,” is an old man who, having experienced much, has found the taste of life bitter:

“‘Forward!’ rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of ‘Forward’ till ten thousand years have gone.”

The poem is a long series of questions which, in their confusion and tumult, express again all the problems of the nineteenth century. “Equal born?” he asks, and answers, “Yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.” England had become the mistress of the world, yet,

“Russia bursts our Indian barrier. Shall we fight her? Shall we  
yield?”

England’s possessions were far-reaching:

"Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
Shall we hold them? Shall we loose them? Take the suffrage of the  
plow."

England had recognized a great social question, yet still

"City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime,"  
and

"A single sordid attic holds the living and the dead."

Science had found the explanation of disease; yet was there

"... no man halt or deaf or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?"

Science and philosophy had propounded a new theory of the  
meaning and development of life, yet Tennyson saw

"Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud."

And finally there rings through all the poem the confusion of  
doubt and belief, hope and despair:

"Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?  
Read the world's wide annals, you, and take their wisdom for your  
friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past.  
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will  
last."

Of Tennyson's later life, little need be said. Of his new  
home, Aldworth in Sussex, Aubrey de Vere writes: "Year  
after year he trod the two stately terraces with men the most  
noted of the time, statesmen, warriors, men of letters, science  
and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, but  
none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth."  
Tennyson outlived nearly all those friends. After he was  
sixty-five years of age, he turned to the writing of poetical  
drama and produced *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *Becket*, *The For-  
esters*, *The Cup*, and *The Falcon*, several of which were pre-  
sented on the stage and commended highly by his contempo-  
raries, though to-day they are but another evidence that  
Tennyson was not a dramatic writer. In 1884, at the insist-

ence of Gladstone, he accepted a peerage which was offered him by the Queen. In 1885 he produced the volume, *Tiresias and Other Poems*, and in 1889 *Demeter and Other Poems*. On the day of the publication of the latter came the news of the death of Browning, "so loving and appreciative," Tennyson wrote, "that one cannot but mourn his loss as a friend and as a poet; one feels that one has lost a mint of great thoughts and feelings and much else besides." In September, 1892, Tennyson went over the proof of his last volume *The Death of Ænone*. What age and the changing years had done to the poet Tennyson may be seen in the title poem, where

"Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,  
Struck by a poisoned arrow in the fight,  
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the mist  
Rose like a wraith of his dead self."

There is nothing here of the imagination and beauty of the early poem; far too much of a strict English conventionality and weakness of sentiment which had been growing upon Tennyson during the passing years. The poet's death, on October 12, 1892, was a fitting climax to his long placid life; he died as he had lived, surrounded by family and friends, in the place and among the people he knew and loved, admired and revered by all England. He was buried in Westminster Abbey beside his illustrious contemporary, Robert Browning.

The tone of the work of those last years is, not unnaturally, more placid, more reconciled, less questioning, less doubting. There is still, once in a while, in poems like *Vastness*, something of the chaos of *Locksley Hall*:

"Raving politics, never at rest, — as this poor earth's pale history  
runs,  
What is it but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of  
suns?"

. . . . .

"What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of  
prayer,  
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is  
fair?"

But, in general, Tennyson had found in *In Memoriam*, for himself and for his time, a comfortable philosophy and a con-

sistent belief which he maintained to the end. This he expressed at the end of his life in *Merlin and the Gleam* and in *Crossing the Bar*, which he himself asked to have placed always at the end of editions of his works, as indicative of the faith with which he died.

Thus Tennyson lived through nearly the whole of the changing century, and died, the spokesman of the English people, the ideal English poet. Even in his youth he had seemed to those who saw him all that a poet should be. "That man *must* be a poet!" one of his Cambridge contemporaries had said upon first seeing him in the common room; another description of his physical appearance serves to bear out this impression: "Six feet high, broad-chested, strong-limbed, his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child's, but of great size and strength. What struck one most about him was the union of strength and refinement." Like the bards of the heroic age, he charmed those who were privileged to hear him by the way in which he read aloud his own poems,

"mouthing out his hollow oes and aes —  
Deep chested music."

He was not only the ideal poet, but the ideal *English* poet. He wrote of places and people and things which the English knew, and in which they found the delight of recognition. He felt no real "languishment for skies Italian," and was never happier than when he returned, from one of his brief trips, to home and England.

The explanation of the weakness which we to-day feel in him goes back directly to this position as the ideal and representative English poet of the Victorian age. He was not only national; he was *insular*. He was distinctly English, hardly British. All his life revolt and rebellion seemed to him the "red fool-fury of the Seine." Not only was he insular; he was distinctly *local*. As his most characteristic scenery was that of Lincolnshire, so he was at his best when he dealt with the point of view of the section and of the people whom he knew. Though he did write of the northern farmers, it is significant that all that the old parish clerk who

had lived in Lincolnshire all his life could say of the older Tennyson was that he "remembered on 'im dying." As for *Rizpah*, the story came to Tennyson, third hand, through a friend who had read it in a paper. For Tennyson was not only of Lincolnshire — he was also a Lincolnshire *gentleman*, and as a result, he was limited by a certain comfortable complacency of one who knew himself of a definite class, in a definite place, at a definite time. He was limited, too, by that very seriousness so characteristic of the people he represented. He did not lack humor — the man Tennyson possessed it in a great degree as story after story which remains to us illustrates; there was even in him a good deal of that earthy humor which created Falstaff and the grave-diggers. But as a poet he took himself with entire seriousness; his was a conscious voice, a conscious inspiration; and as a prophet he took himself, as England took him, solemnly. It is that Tennyson who cannot satisfy a later age. What to his contemporaries seemed vision we to-day feel commonplace; what was strength in his time seems sentiment in ours; what was the voice of the prophet has become the platitude of common sense. The twentieth century no longer turns to Tennyson for insight into life, for vision of the future; his life is not our life, his faith not our faith.

There is, however, another Tennyson whom our age has not outgrown, whom it is likely no age which loves the English language will ever outgrow — not Tennyson the spokesman of his age, nor Tennyson the religious teacher, nor Tennyson the thinker, but Tennyson the artist, the master of metre, language, and form. It is natural that Tennyson should be compared with Virgil. Both were imitators of greater originals; both were national poets, though Virgil's nationalism was hardly so circumscribed as Tennyson's; both were poets of nature once removed — of nature, chosen, selected, by the eye of the artist, not the chaotic superabundant nature of the earlier romanticists. Both were the representative voices of their own day and the prophets of the future, and both were, in the highest degree, conscious artists. It is inevitable, also, that any estimate of Tennyson the artist should employ some of the same terms which he used of Virgil. "Landscape-lover," he called Virgil, and he used the expression exactly; not "nature-lover," in the sense in which

we use the word of Wordsworth or of Keats, but lover of pictorial nature. Tennyson himself said of his making of figures: "I often chronicle on the spot in four or five words or more whatever strikes me as picturesque in nature." It is this sort of scenery which seems to us most characteristic of Tennyson:

". . . far-off three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow  
Stood sunset-flushed."

or this:

"On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud and lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew."

or:

"The long brook falling through the clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cararact to the sea."

In the same way, he is the lover of the pictorial in his descriptions of people:

". . . white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulders, but his sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's."

again:

"And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-Eaters came."

or the picture of Lady Godiva:

"She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud; anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee."

Tennyson's characteristic description is static; whether it is of landscape, of man, or of the architecture and art made by man, we see it as we might in the work of a painter, in color and line:

"Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge,  
Crown'd with the minster tower."

or this:

"... Sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd  
 From off her shoulder backward borne;  
 From one hand dipp'd a crocus; one hand grasp'd  
 The mild bull's golden horn."

"Lord of language," Tennyson called Virgil also, and, except for Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Milton, there is perhaps no English poet who so truly deserves the title as does Tennyson. Lacking the resonance of Marlowe, the exuberance of Shakespeare, the sonorousness of Milton, Tennyson was yet a master of one of the "stateliest measures ever moulded by the lips of man." Such lines as this are, in their mastery of sound and language, worthy to be ranked with the greatest:

"Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —  
 And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon."

The magic of sheer poetry, of the complete fusion of sound and sense, was Tennyson's particularly in his earlier poems. We hear it in

"... a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly  
 Down to tower'd Camelot,"

and in the

"... sweet music here that softlier falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass,"

and in the songs found in *The Princess*. Even in the later Tennyson that magic of poetry is not lost; it is still in the exquisite music of the lines:

"'Frater Ave atque Vale,' as we wander'd to and fro,  
 Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below,  
 Sweet Catullus' all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio."

It is the perfection of his artistry which is, for our age even more than for his own, the enduring grandeur of Tennyson.

No modern poet has labored more truly on his work or believed more sincerely in the greatness of his art or has striven more nobly for perfection than did Tennyson. The writing of poetry was to him not a mere exercise, nor, on the other hand, the result of a fine fervor; it was a vocation in which he toiled as laboriously as any worker in metals or precious gems. The whirligig of time has brought in its revenges so far as his position as the voice of the English people is concerned; but if we have lost the old worship of the prophet, we have gained a new understanding and admiration of the artist. "The labor of the file" was Tennyson's labor. At his worst, we can bring no charge against him more serious than sentimentality, a comfortable conservatism, a too-easy faith; at his best he is one of the greatest glories of the English tongue.



## DEDICATION—TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved — O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria — since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
“She wrought her people lasting good;*

*“Her court was pure; her life serene;  
God gave her peace; her land reposed;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;*

*“And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*“By shaping some august decree  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people’s will,  
And compass’d by the inviolate sea.”*

## JUVENILIA



### CLARIBEL

#### A MELODY

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall;  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone; 10  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone;  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth 20  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

### NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flowing  
Under my eye?

When will the wind be weary of blowing  
 Over the sky?

When will the clouds be weary of fleeting?

When will the heart be weary of beating?

And nature die?

Never, O, never, nothing will die;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

10

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'Tis the world's winter;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago;

Earth is dry to the centre,

20

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,

Thro' and thro',

Here and there,

Till the air

And the ground

Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;

30

It will change, but it will not fade.

So let the wind range;

For even and morn

Ever will be  
Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

# ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing  
Under my eye;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing  
Over the sky.  
One after another the white clouds are fleeting;  
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating  
Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow;  
The wind will cease to blow; 10  
The clouds will cease to fleet;  
The heart will cease to beat;  
For all things must die.

All things must die.  
Spring will come never more.

O, vanity!  
Death waits at the door.  
See! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking.  
We are call'd — we must go. 20  
Laid low, very low,  
In the dark we must lie.  
The merry glees are still;  
The voice of the bird  
Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

O, misery!

Hark! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

30

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

40

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

## ISABEL

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed

With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,

Clear, without heat, undying, tended by

Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane

Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,

Madonna-wise on either side her head;

Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign

The summer calm of golden charity,  
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
     Revered Isabel, the crown and head,      10  
 The stately flower of female fortitude,  
     Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
 And thorough-edged intellect to part  
     Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;  
     The laws of marriage character'd in gold  
 Upon the blanch'd tablets of her heart;  
 A love still burning upward, giving light  
 To read those laws; an accent very low  
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow      20  
     Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
 Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,  
     Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;  
 A courage to endure and to obey;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,      30  
 Till in its outward current it absorbs  
     With swifter movement and in purer light  
     The vexed eddies of its wayward brother;  
     A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
     Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
     Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other —  
     Shadow forth thee: — the world hath not  
         another

(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee  
 And thou of God in thy great charity) 40  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange."

*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-pots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all;  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, "My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said; 10  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats. 20  
 She only said, "The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,

Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;  
The cock sung out an hour ere light;

From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her; without hope of change,

In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn, 30

Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary,

He cometh not," she said;

She said, "I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall

A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,

The cluster'd marish-mosses crept. 40

Hard by a poplar shook alway,

All silver-green with gnarled bark:

For leagues no other tree did mark

The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, "My life is dreary,

He cometh not," she said;

She said, "I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,

And the shrill winds were up and away, 50

In the white curtain, to and fro,

She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,

And wild winds bound within their cell,

The shadow of the poplar fell

Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, "The night is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

60

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

70

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.

80

Then said she, "I am very dreary,  
He will not come," she said;  
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,  
O God, that I were dead!"

SONG — THE OWL

I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,  
 And the far-off stream is dumb,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch      10  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME

I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 That her voice, untuneful grown,  
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

11

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
 But I cannot mimic it;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo, 10  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o!

## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
 The foryward-flowing tide of time;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
 For it was in the golden prime 10  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue:  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
 And broider'd sofas on each side:

In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moonlit sward  
Was damask work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.

30

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

40

Still onward; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow

50

Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vari-colored shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odor in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

60

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung;  
Not he, but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

70

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd; the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind;  
A sudden splendor from behind

80

Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
 And, flowing rapidly between  
 Their interspaces, counterchanged  
 The level lake with diamond-plots  
     Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
     For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
 Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90  
 Grew darker from that under-flame;  
 So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
 With silver anchor left afloat,  
 In marvel whence that glory came  
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
     Entranced with that place and time,  
     So worthy of the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn — 100  
 A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
 Full of the city's stilly sound,  
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
 The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
     Graven with emblems of the time,  
     In honor of the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares  
 From the long alley's latticed shade

Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
    After the fashion of the time,  
    And humor of the golden prime 120  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
    Of night-new-risen, that marvellous time 130  
    To celebrate the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone; 140  
    The sweetest lady of the time,  
    Well worthy of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd 150  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
     Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him — in his golden prime,  
     THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

### THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
     With golden stars above;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
     The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
     He saw thro' his own soul.  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
     An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded  
     The secretest walks of fame: 10  
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
     And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
     And of so fierce a flight,  
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
     Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
    Them earthward till they lit;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,  
    The fruitful wit 20

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew  
    Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
    A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
    The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
    Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
    Tho' one did fling the fire; 30  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
    Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
    Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
    Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
    Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
    Melted like snow. 40

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
    Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
    Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
 WISDOM, a name to shake  
 All evil dreams of power — a sacred name.  
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
 And as the lightning to the thunder 50  
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
 She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND

### I

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
 With thy shallow wit;  
 Vex not thou the poet's mind,  
 For thou canst not fathom it.  
 Clear and bright it should be ever,  
 Flowing like a crystal river,  
 Bright as light, and clear as wind.

### II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;  
 All the place is holy ground;  
 Hollow smile and frozen sneer 10  
 Come not here.  
 Holy water will I pour  
 Into every spicy flower  
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.

The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,

There is frost in your breath

Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear

From the groves within

20

The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.

It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder;

All day and all night it is ever drawn

From the brain of the purple mountain

Which stands in the distance yonder.

30

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,

And the mountain draws it from heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love;

And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,

You never would hear it, your ears are so dull;

So keep where you are; you are foul with sin;

It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

## THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,

Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest

To little harps of gold; and while they mused,

Whispering to each other half in fear,

Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no  
more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the happy  
blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;  
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls 10

From wandering over the lea;  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells  
High over the full-toned sea.

O, hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me;  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;  
Here it is only the mew that wails;  
We will sing to you all the day. 20

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land  
Over the islands free;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;  
Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,  
And sweet is the color of cove and cave, 30  
And sweet shall your welcome be.

O, hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we.  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words;  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee.  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore

40

All the world o'er, all the world o'er?

Whither away? listen and stay; mariner, mariner, fly  
no more.

### CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbor villages

Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;

Two strangers meeting at a festival;

Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;

Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,

Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed;

Two children in one hamlet born and bred:

So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

### ADELINE

#### I

MYSTERY of mysteries,

Faintly smiling Adeline,

Scarce of earth nor all divine,

Nor unhappy, nor at rest,

But beyond expression fair

With thy floating flaxen hair;

Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes

Take the heart from out my breast.

Wherefore those dim looks of thine,

Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

10

#### II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,

Like a lily which the sun

Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
 And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
 As a Naiad in a well,  
 Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
 Of a maiden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold? 20  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline?

III

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
 For sure thou art not all alone.  
 Do beating hearts of salient springs  
 Keep measure with thine own?  
 Hast thou heard the butterflies  
 What they say betwixt their wings?  
 Or in stillest evenings 30  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dews?  
 Or when little airs arise,  
 How the merry bluebell rings  
 To the mosses underneath?  
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
 Of the lilies at sunrise?  
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind, 40  
 Some spirit of a crimson rose  
 In love with thee forgets to close

His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
 All night long on darkness blind.  
 What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
     And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
     Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## v

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
     When thou gazest at the skies? 50  
 Doth the low-tongued Orient  
     Wander from the side of the morn,  
     Dripping with Sabæan spice  
 On thy pillow, lowly bent  
     With melodious airs lovelorn,  
 Breathing Light against thy face,  
 While his locks a-drooping twined  
 Round thy neck in subtle ring  
 Make a carcanet of rays,  
     And ye talk together still, 60  
 In the language wherewith Spring  
     Letters cowslips on the hill?  
 Hence that look and smile of thine,  
     Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET

## I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower

Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo flower?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood, 10  
 From all things outward you have won  
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the sun.  
 The very smile before you speak,  
 That dimples your transparent cheek,  
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
 The senses with a still delight  
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
 Like the tender amber round  
 Which the moon about her spreadeth 20  
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, always  
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright;  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light 30  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars?

Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
     Just ere the falling axe did part  
     The burning brain from the true heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so well? 40

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
     And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
     Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
     You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
     Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
     Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue, 50  
     And less aërially blue,  
     But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me speak.  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek.  
     The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching limes are tall and shady,  
     And faint, rainy lights are seen, 60  
     Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
     Where all day long you sit between  
     Joy and woe, and whisper each.

Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

“MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS”

My life is full of weary days,  
 But good things have not kept aloof,  
 Nor wander'd into other ways;  
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
 Of that deep grave to which I go,  
 Shake hands once more; I cannot sink  
 So far — far down, but I shall know  
 Thy voice, and answer from below. 10

When in the darkness over me  
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
 Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,  
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood  
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
 And rugged barks begin to bud,  
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with may,  
 Ring sudden scatches of the jay, 20

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
 And on my clay her darnel grow;  
 Come only, when the days are still,  
 And at my headstone whisper low,  
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

## PART I

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd                    20  
By slow horses; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
dine Skimming down to Camelot:

small sailboat The  
for pleasure-riding

But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
     The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to tower'd Camelot;  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott."

## PART II

There she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colors gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear 10  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
     Winding down to Camelot;  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,

And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad, 20  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights 30  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, went to Camelot;  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed:  
 "I am half sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

### PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled on the yellow field,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

~~adorned with~~  
~~precious~~ jewels  
 precious  
 The gemmy bridle glitter'd free, 10  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy. constellation  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
 As he rode down to Camelot;  
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armor rung,  
 Beside remote Shalott.

Ail in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather, 20  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
 As he rode down to Camelot;  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd 30  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
 As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 "Tirra lirra," by the river  
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces thro' the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume, 40  
 She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
 "The curse is come upon me," cried  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
 The pale yellow woods were waning,  
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
     Over tower'd Camelot;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse                      10  
 Like some bold seër in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance —  
 With a glassy countenance  
     Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
 That loosely flew to left and right —                      20  
 The leaves upon her falling light —  
 Thro' the noises of the night  
     She floated down to Camelot;  
 And as the boat-head wound along  
 The willowy hills and fields among,  
 They heard her singing her last song,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her blood was frozen slowly, 30  
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
     Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
 The first house by the water-side,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By garden-wall and gallery,  
 A gleaming shape she floated by,  
 Dead-pale between the houses high, 40  
     Silent into Camelot.

citizen Out upon the wharfs they came,  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 And round the prow they read her name,  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer;  
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
     All the knights at Camelot: 50  
 But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, "She has a lovely face;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
     The Lady of Shalott."

### CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.

The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
 The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine  
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.

Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10  
 Stands up and takes the morning; but in front  
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
 Mournful C  none, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade 20  
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass;  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.  
 The purple flower droops, the golden bee  
 Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.  
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
 And I am all aweary of my life.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain  
    brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God.

Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40  
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills;  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone. 51

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft;  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart 61  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
 Came down upon my heart:

“‘My own C  none,  
 Beautiful-brow'd C  none, my own soul,  
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven 70  
 “For the most fair,” would seem to award it thine,  
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine.  
 And added, ‘This was cast upon the board,  
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
 Rose feud, with question unto whom ’twere due; 80  
 But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
 Elected umpire, Her   comes to-day,  
 Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.’

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 It was the deep midnight; one silvery cloud 90  
 Had lost his way between the piny sides  
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,

Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,  
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'. 100

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her to whom  
 Coming thro' heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110  
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.  
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
 'Which in all action is the end of all; 120  
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
 And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power

Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

“‘Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These thrée alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said: ‘I woo thee not with gifts. 150  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,

So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks, 160  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceas'd,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful, 170  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder; from the violets her light foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
 Between the shadows of the vine-branches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee  
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'  
 She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for fear;  
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower;

And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

“Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew 200  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
High over the blue gorge, and all between  
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
Foster’d the callow eaglet — from beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
The panther’s roar came muffled, while I sat 210  
Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Ænone see the morning mist  
Sweep thro’ them; never see them overlaid  
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her

The Abominable, that uninvited came 220  
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
 And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears? 230  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
 O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die. 240

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born. Her child! — a shudder comes  
 Across me: never child be born of me, 250  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
 Walking the cold and starless road of death  
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
 A fire dances before her. and a sound 260  
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
 What this may be I know not, but I know  
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
 All earth and air seem only burning fire."

### THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
 Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
 I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
 Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,  
 I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
 From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
 Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
 The rock rose clear, or winding stair. 10  
 My soul would live alone unto herself  
 In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,  
 "Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade  
 Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:

“Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.” 20

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands, 30  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd  
From out a golden cup. 40

So that she thought, “And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?”

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,  
 And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,  
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires 50  
 From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
 All various, each a perfect whole  
 From living Nature, fit for every mood  
 And change of my still soul. 60

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of sand,  
 And some one pacing there alone,  
 Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
 Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.  
 You seem'd to hear them climb and fall 70  
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind. 80

And one a foreground black with stones and slags;  
 Beyond, a line of heights; and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags;  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twilight pour'd  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
 As fit for every mood of mind, 90  
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,  
 Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
 Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;  
 An angel look'd at her. 100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
 A group of Houris bow'd to see  
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
 In some fair space of sloping greens  
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
 And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
 To list a foot-fall, ere he saw 110  
 The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
 Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
 And many a tract of palm and rice,  
 The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
 A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
 From off her shoulder backward borne;  
 From one hand droop'd a crocus; one hand grasp'd  
 The mild bull's golden horn. 120

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair  
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
 Carved out of Nature for itself was there,  
 Not less than life design'd.

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound; 130  
 And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;  
 And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
 From cheek and throat and chin. 140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
 Many an arch high up did lift,  
 And angels rising and descending met  
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
 With cycles of the human tale  
 Of this wide world, the times of every land  
 So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
 Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings; 150  
 Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
 The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind  
 All force in bonds that might endure,  
 And here once more like some sick man declined,  
 And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those great bells  
 Began to chime. She took her throne;  
 She sat betwixt the shining oriels,  
 To sing her songs alone. 160

And thro' the oriels' colored flame  
 Two godlike faces gazed below;  
 Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam.  
 The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion were  
 Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
 Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
 In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
 Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, 170  
 And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
 Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
 Her low preamble all alone,  
 More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
 Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
 Joying to feel herself alive,  
 Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,  
 Lord of the senses five; 180

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,  
 And let the world have peace or wars,  
 'Tis one to me." She — when young night divine  
 Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —

Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,

“I marvel if my still delight 190

In this great house so royal-rich and wide

Be flatter'd to the height.

“O all things fair to sate my various eyes!

O shapes and hues that please me well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,

My Gods, with whom I dwell!

“O Godlike isolation which art mine,

I can but count thee perfect gain,

What time I watch the darkening droves of swine

That range on yonder plain. 200

“In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,

They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;

And oft some brainless devil enters in,

And drives them to the deep.”

Then of the moral instinct would she prate

And of the rising from the dead,

As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;

And at the last she said:

“I take possession of man's mind and deed.

I care not what the sects may brawl. 210

I sit as God holding no form of creed,

But contemplating all.”

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
 Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd; so three years  
 She prosper'd; on the fourth she fell,  
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
 Struck thro' with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
 God, before whom ever lie bare  
 The abysmal deeps of personality,  
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight  
 The airy hand confusion wrought,  
 Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
 The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
 Fell on her, from which mood was born 230  
 Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood  
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,  
 "My spacious mansion built for me,  
 Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
 Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
 And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
 And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
 On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
 That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
 Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
 Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
 Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
 Left on the shore, that hears all night 250  
 The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
 Their moon-led waters white;

A star that with the choral starry dance  
 Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
 The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
 Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
 "No voice," she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
 "No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world;  
 One deep, deep silence all!" 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,  
 Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
 Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
 Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
 And nothing saw, for her despair,  
 But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
 No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
 And ever worse with growing time, 270  
 And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
 And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
 With blackness as a solid wall,  
 Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
 Of human footsteps fall:

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
 In doubt and great perplexity,  
 A little before moonrise hears the low  
 Moan of an unknown sea; 280

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
 Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
 Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found  
 A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.  
 There comes no murmur of reply.  
 What is it that will take away my sin,  
 And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away. 290  
 ✱ "Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,  
 "Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
 So lightly, beautifully built;  
 Perchance I may return with others there  
 When I have purged my guilt."

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

lotus - a  
flower that  
acts like  
a drug.  
lose all ambibi

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,  
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;

And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, 10

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke.

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown

In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the dale 20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seem'd the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them 30  
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
 Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
 On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore;  
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore 40  
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
 Then some one said, "We will return no more;"  
 And all at once they sang, "Our island home  
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

### CHORIC SONG

#### I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 10  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
 While all things else have rest from weariness?  
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone,  
 We only toil, who are the first of things,  
 And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown;  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings, 20  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
 "There is no joy but calm!" —  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

## III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 30  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
 Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40  
 Death is the end of life; ah, why  
 Should life all labor be?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
 All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 50  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence — ripen, fall, and cease:  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 60  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 70  
 And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change;  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold,  
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain. 80  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There *is* confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labor unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly —  
 With half-dropt eyelid still, 90  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill —  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —  
 To watch the emerald-color'd water falling  
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,

Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the  
pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak, 100  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge  
was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-foun-  
tains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurl'd 111

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,  
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful  
song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the  
soil, 120

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;  
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whisper'd  
— down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and  
oar;

O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
“*The Legend of Good Women*,” long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong gales 10  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
 Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
 And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
 And trumpets blown for wars; 20

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs;  
 And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries,  
 And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
 Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes tall  
 Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
 Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall,  
 Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
 That run before the fluttering tongues of fire; 30  
 White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
 And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
 Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
 Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
 And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
 Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,  
 Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
 Torn from the fringe of spray. 40

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
 Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
 As when a great thought strikes along the brain  
 And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
 A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
 That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;  
 And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
 Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep 50  
 Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
 Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
 In an old wood; fresh-wash'd in coolest dew  
 The maiden splendors of the morning star  
 Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean  
 Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
 Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
 green,  
 New from its silken sheath. 60

The dim red Morn had died, her journey done,  
 And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
 Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,  
 Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
 Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
 Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
 Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
 Their humid arms festooning tree to tree, 70  
 And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
 The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
 On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,  
 Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
 The times when I remember to have been  
 Joyful and free from blame. 80

And from within me a clear undertone  
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
 "Pass freely thro'; the wood is all thine own  
 Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,  
 Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing there;  
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
 Froze my swift speech; she turning on my face 90  
 The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
 Spoke slowly in her place:

"I had great beauty; ask thou not my name:  
 No one can be more wise than destiny.  
 Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
 I brought calamity." *Helen of Troy*

"No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
 Myself for such a face had boldly died,"  
 I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
 To one that stood beside. 100

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
 To her full height her stately stature draws;  
 "My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse:  
 This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place *Iphigenia, daughter*  
 Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years: *of Agamemnon*  
 My father held his hand upon his face; *She was sacrificed*  
 I, blinded with my tears, *in order to get*  
*favorable winds so Greece*  
*could sail for Troy*

"Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs *(Similar*  
 As in a dream. Dimly I could descry 110 *to the sl*  
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes, *only he*  
 Waiting to see me die, *was spea*

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;  
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;  
 The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat —  
 Touch'd — and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow:  
 "I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,  
 Then when I left my home." 120

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,  
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:  
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,  
 That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise, *Cleopatra,*  
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd; *Egyptian queen*  
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:

“I govern’d men by change, and so I sway’d      130  
All moods. ’Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humor ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood:  
That makes my only woe.

“Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony?      140

“The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune’s neck; we sat as God by God:  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

“We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which out-burn’d Canopus. O, my life  
In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

“And the wild kiss, when fresh from war’s alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,      150  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

“And there he died: and when I heard my name  
Sigh’d forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other; with a worm I balk’d his fame.  
What else was left? look here!” —

With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
 The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
 Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
 Showing the aspick's bite. — *180*

“I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
 Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
 A name for ever! — lying robed and crown'd,  
 Worthy a Roman spouse.”

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
 Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
 From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change  
 Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;  
 Because with sudden motion from the ground *170*  
 She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light  
 The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
 As once they drew into two burning rings  
 All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
 Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
 A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,  
 And singing clearer than the crested bird  
 That claps his wings at dawn: *180*

“The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
 From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
 Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,  
 Far-heard beneath the moon.

“The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
 Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine;  
 All night the splinter’d crags that wall the dell  
 With spires of silver shine.”

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
 The lawn by some cathedral, thro’ the door 190  
 Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
 Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm’d and tied  
 To where he stands, — so stood I, when that flow  
 Of music left the lips of her that died  
 To save her father’s vow;

*phthoth defeated*  
 The daughter of the warrior Gileadite, *Tephthah daughter*  
 A maiden pure; as when she went along  
 From Mizpeh’s tower’d gate with welcome light,  
 With timbrel and with song. 200

*at thing that*  
 My words leapt forth: “Heaven heads the count of  
*himy vol.* crimes  
 With that wild oath.” She render’d answer high:  
 “Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times  
*ghies*  
 I would be born and die.

“Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
 Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
 Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit  
 Changed, I was ripe for death.

“My God, my land, my father — these did move  
 Me from my bliss of life that Nature gave, 210  
 Lower’d softly with a threefold cord of love  
 Down to a silent grave.

“And I went mourning, ‘No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers’ — emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

“Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower. 220

“The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken’d glen,

“Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

“When the next moon was roll’d into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall’d my desire. 230  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father’s will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

“Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.” Here her face  
Glow’d, as I look’d at her. 240

She lock'd her lips; she left me where I stood:

“Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,

As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

“Alas! alas!” a low voice, full of care,

Murmur'd beside me: “Turn and look on me; 250  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

“Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!

O me, that I should ever see the light!  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor I  
Do hunt me, day and night.”

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust;

To whom the Egyptian: “O, you tamely died!  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side.” 260  
With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,

Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark

Ere I saw her who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
 Who kneeling, with one arm about her king, 270  
 Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
 Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep  
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
 That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
 Into that wondrous track of dreams again!  
 But no two dreams are like. 280

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
 Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
 In yearnings than can never be express  
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,  
 Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
 Faints, faded by its heat.

“YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE”

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
 Within this region I subsist,  
 Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
 And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
 That sober-suited Freedom chose,

The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown, 10  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute, 20

Tho' power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great —  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

### “OF OLD SAT FREEDOM”

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet;  
Above her shook the starry lights;  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
 But fragments of her mighty voice  
 Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field  
 To mingle with the human race, 10  
 And part by part to men reveal'd  
 The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
 From her isle-altar gazing down,  
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
 And, King-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
 The wisdom of a thousand years  
 Is in them. May perpetual youth  
 Keep dry their light from tears; 20

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
 Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
 Turning to scorn with lips divine  
 The falsehood of extremes!

### “LOVE THOU THY LAND”

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought  
 From out the storied past, and used  
 Within the present, but transfused  
 Thro' future time by power of thought;

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,

For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings 10  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the years;  
Cut Prejudice against the grain.  
But gentle words are always gain;  
Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise —  
It grows to guerdon after-days.  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,  
Not master'd by some modern term, 30  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;  
And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life that, working strongly, binds —

Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals 50  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom —  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States — 60

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;

And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head; 70  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

O, yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood; 80

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes; 90

And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke.

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought —  
Who sprang from English blood! 10

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine — the single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden smote  
Will vibrate to the doom. 20

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS



### THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve, —  
The game of forfeits done — the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away —  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd; and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,                   10  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the icè into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at geology and schism;                   cine  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world: "at home was little left,  
And none abroad; there was no anchor, none,                   20  
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."  
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."  
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way  
At college; but another which you had —  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),

What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, "he  
burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books" —  
And then to me demanding why: "O, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30  
Something so said 'twas nothing — that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;  
God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,  
"Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the mastodon,  
Nor we those times; and why should any man  
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine  
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth, 39  
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I,"  
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,  
And have it; keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;  
For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen. Then at my request  
He brought it; and the poet, little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, 50  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,  
King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,



“It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro’ the helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruin’d shrine he stept  
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
 By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock, 101  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
 And o’er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood, 110  
 This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
 In act to throw; but at the last it seem’d  
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal’d  
 There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
 That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
 So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 “Hast thou perform’d my mission which I gave?  
 What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 120  
 “I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:  
 “Thou hast betray’d thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as bescem'd  
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;  
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again                    130  
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,                    140  
 Should thus be lost forever from the earth,  
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
 What good should follow this, if this were done?  
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
 An act unprofitable, against himself?  
 The king is sick, and knows not what he does.  
 What record, or what relic of my lord  
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath                    150  
 And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
 Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;  
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence;  
 But now much honor and much fame were lost." 160

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
 And hid Excalibur the second time,  
 And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
 "What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 "I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:  
 "Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, 170  
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!

Authority forgets a dying king,  
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
 In whom should meet the offices of all,  
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180  
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;  
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,  
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch  
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn, 190  
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
 "Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. 200  
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 "Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 210  
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
 "My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes                 220  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the king,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die." 231

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang 240  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —  
 And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge, *f*  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these  
 Three queens with crowns of gold — and from them  
 rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, 250  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
 And to the barge they came. There those three queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.  
 But she that rose the tallest of them all  
 And fairest laid his head upon her lap

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,     261  
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
 Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white  
 And colorless, and like the wither'd moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —  
 That made his forehead like a rising sun  
 High from the dais-throne — were parch'd with dust;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,     270  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the king;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists of Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 "Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead,     280  
 When every morning brought a noble chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:     290  
 "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within himself make pure! but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day. 300  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest — if indeed I go —  
 For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —  
 To the island-valley of Avilion; 310  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere 320  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell;  
 At which the parson, sent to sleep with sound,

And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we  
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read —  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness — 330  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;  
 I know not; but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud, as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn.  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
 "There now — that's nothing!" drew a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.  
 And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores, 340  
 Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams  
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with the crowd,  
 There camè a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
 Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,  
 "Arthur is come again: he cannot die."  
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
 Repeated — "Come again, and thrice as fair;"  
 And, further inland, voices echoed — "Come 350  
 With all good things, and war shall be no more."  
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

### DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
 William and Dora. William was his son,  
 And she his niece. He often look'd at them,

And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."  
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
 And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because  
 He had been always with her in the house,  
 Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said: "My son,  
 I married late, but I would wish to see 10  
 My grandchild on my knees before I die;  
 And I have set my heart upon a match.  
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is well  
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.  
 She is my brother's daughter; he and I  
 Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred  
 His daughter Dora. Take her for your wife;  
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
 For many years." But William answer'd short: 20  
 "I cannot marry Dora; by my life,  
 I will not marry Dora!" Then the old man  
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:  
 "You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!  
 But in my time a father's word was law,  
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;  
 Consider, William, take a month to think,  
 And let me have an answer to my wish,  
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
 And never more darken my doors again." 30  
 But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,  
 And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
 The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;  
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
 The month was out he left his father's house,  
 And hired himself to work within the fields;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;    40  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law."  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
"It cannot be; my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William; then distresses came on him,  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,    50  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

"I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,    60  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you.  
You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound    70

That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
 Far off the farmer came into the field  
 And spied her not, for none of all his men  
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
 But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
 The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80  
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
 And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?  
 Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"  
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
 And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"  
 "And did I not," said Allan, "did I not  
 Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again: 90  
 "Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"  
 And Allan said: "I see it is a trick  
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
 You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
 To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy;  
 But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100  
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field  
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,  
 Remembering the day when first she came,

And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise    110  
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
 And Dora said: "My uncle took the boy;  
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
 He says that he will never see me more."  
 Then answer'd Mary: "This shall never be,  
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself;  
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
 His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,  
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;    120  
 And I will beg of him to take thee back.  
 But if he will not take thee back again,  
 Then thou and I will live within one house,  
 And work for William's child, until he grows  
 Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd  
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
 The door was off the latch; they peep'd, and saw  
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,    130  
 Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out  
 And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
 From Allan's watch and sparkled by the fire.  
 Then they came in; but when the boy beheld  
 His mother, he cried out to come to her;  
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

"O father! — if you let me call you so —

I never came a-begging for myself,  
 Or William, or this child; but now I come  
 For Dora; take her back, she loves you well. 140  
 O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
 He could not ever rue his marrying me —  
 I had been a patient wife; but, Sir, he said  
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus.  
 'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know  
 The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd  
 His face and pass'd — unhappy that I am!  
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight 150  
 His father's memory; and take Dora back,  
 And let all this be as it was before."

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;  
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs:  
 "I have been to blame — to blame. I have kill'd  
 my son.

I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son.  
 May God forgive me! — I have been to blame.  
 Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about  
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. 160  
 And all the man was broken with remorse;  
 And all his love came back a hundred-fold;  
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child  
 Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
 Within one house together, and as years  
 Went forward Mary took another mate;  
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn, and sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin!

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,                    10  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;  
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.                    20

O, take the meaning, Lord! I do not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body then;  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard                    30  
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,

I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh.  
 I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf I am,  
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
 About the column's base, and almost blind,  
 And scarce can recognize the fields I know;  
 And both my thighs are rotted with the dew; 40  
 Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,  
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
 Have mercy, mercy! take away my sin!

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
 Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?  
 Who may be made a saint if I fail here?  
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
 For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
 For either they were stoned, or crucified, 50  
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here  
 To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
 Bear witness, if I could have found a way —  
 And heedfully I sifted all my thought —  
 More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
 I had not stinted practice, O my God!

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
 Not this alone I bore; but while I lived 60  
 In the white convent down the valley there,  
 For many weeks about my loins I wore  
 The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,  
 And spake not of it to a single soul,

Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain-side. 71

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live.  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind, 80  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this —  
Or else I dream — and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns —  
So much — even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
"Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages!" then they prate

Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
 Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall, 100  
 Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
 That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
 Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
 House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
 Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
 And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
 I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
 Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints; 110  
 Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
 I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am wet  
 With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
 I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;  
 A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
 And strive and wrestle with thee till I die.  
 O, mercy, mercy! wash away my sin!

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;  
 A sinful man, conceived and born in sin. 120  
 'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;  
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
 That here come those that worship me? Ha! Ha!  
 They think that I am somewhat. What am I?  
 The silly people take me for a saint,  
 And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers;  
 And I, in truth — thou wilt bear witness here —  
 Have all in all endured as much, and more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for saints. 130

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.

What is it I can have done to merit this?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,

And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?

It may be no one, even among the saints,

May match his pains with mine; but what of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,

And in your looking you may kneel to God.

Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd? 140

I think you know I have some power with Heaven

From my long penance; let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout

"Saint Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,

God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,

Can I work miracles and not be saved?

This is not told of any. They were saints.

It cannot be but that I shall be saved, 150

Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"

And lower voices saint me from above.

Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull chrysalis

Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death

Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname

Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,

The watcher on the column till the end; 160

I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now

From my high nest of penance here proclaim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again. 170  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest;  
 They flapp'd my light out as I read; I saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my book;  
 With coltlike whinny and with hoggish whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain, 180  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise;  
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
 But that a time may come — yea, even now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
 Of life — I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without reproach; 190  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
 When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!

Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,  
A flash of light. Is that the angel there 200  
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come!  
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;  
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!  
'Tis gone; 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!  
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet, sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints; I trust  
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven. 210

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people; let them take  
Example, pattern; lead them to thy light. 220

# ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink  
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10  
 Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known, — cities of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them all, —  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades 20  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains; but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,

When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;  
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,  
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with  
me, —

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50

Death closes all; but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;  
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep  
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60  
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are, —  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn. 10

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a God!  
 I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd 20  
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
 And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,  
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
 Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
 To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift.

Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30  
 Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.

Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,     40  
 And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
 In silence, then before thine answer given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
 And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
 In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
 "The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart     50  
 In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
 I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —  
 The lucid outline forming round thee; saw  
 The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
 Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
 Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
 With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
 Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd     60  
 Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;  
 How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power to die,     70

And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the ground.  
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;  
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,  
 I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

### LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis  
     early morn;  
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the  
     bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews  
     call,  
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over  
     Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the  
     sandy tracts,  
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went  
     to rest,  
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow  
     shade,  
 Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver  
     braid. 10

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth  
     sublime  
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of  
     time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land re-  
posed;

When I clung to all the present for the promise that it  
closed;

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could  
see,

Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that  
would be. —

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's  
breast;

In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another  
crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd  
dove;

In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to  
thoughts of love. 20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be  
for one so young,

And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observ-  
ance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the  
truth to me,

Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to  
thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a  
light,

As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern  
night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden  
storm of sighs —

All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel  
eyes —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do  
me wrong;"

Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I  
have loved thee long." 30

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his  
glowing hands;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden  
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the  
chords with might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music  
out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the  
copses ring,

And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness  
of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the  
stately ships,

And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the  
lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no  
more!

O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren  
shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs  
     have sung,  
 Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish  
     tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? — having known me —  
     to decline  
 On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than  
     mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by  
     day,  
 What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize  
     with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a  
     clown,  
 And the grossness of his nature will have weight to  
     drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its  
     novel force,  
 Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his  
     horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are  
     glazed with wine.  
 Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in  
     thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-  
     wrought;  
 Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy  
     lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,

Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster! — Hadst thou less unworthy proved —

Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the  
mind?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew  
her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did she speak  
and move;

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to  
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love  
she bore?

No — she never loved me truly; love is love for ever-  
more.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the  
poet sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering hap-  
pier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart  
be put to proof,

In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on  
the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at  
the wall,

Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows  
rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his  
drunken sleep,

To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that  
thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the  
phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of  
thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on  
thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy  
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice  
will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings  
thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the moth-  
er's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not  
his due.

Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daugh-  
ter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings — she her-  
self was not exempt —

Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish in thy self-  
contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should  
I care?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon  
days like these?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to  
golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets  
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should  
do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's  
ground,

When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are  
laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that  
Honor feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each  
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier  
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous  
Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the  
strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of  
my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming  
years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's  
field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer  
 drawn,  
 Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary  
 dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him  
 then,  
 Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs  
 of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping  
 something new;  
 That which they have done but earnest of the things  
 that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could  
 see,  
 Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that  
 would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic  
 sails,  
 Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with  
 costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd  
 a ghastly dew  
 From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central  
 blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind  
 rushing warm,  
 With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the  
 thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-  
 flags were furl'd  
 In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
 world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful  
 realm in awe,  
 And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal  
 law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left  
 me dry,  
 Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the  
 jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out  
 of joint.  
 Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from  
 point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping  
 nigher,  
 Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-  
 dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose  
 runs,  
 And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process  
 of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his  
 youthful joys,  
 Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a  
 boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on  
the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and  
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a  
laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of  
his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the  
bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for  
their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd  
string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight  
a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleas-  
ure, woman's pain —  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a  
shallower brain. 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd  
with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto  
wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for  
some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to  
beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-  
starr'd; —

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far  
away,

On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and  
happy skies,

Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of  
Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the  
trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-  
fruited tree —

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this  
march of mind,

In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that  
shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope  
and breathing space;

I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my  
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they  
shall run,

Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances  
in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows  
 of the brooks,  
 Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable  
 books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words  
 are wild,  
 But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Chris-  
 tian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious  
 gains,  
 Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with  
 lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun  
 or clime?  
 I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
 Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's  
 moon in Ajalon! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward  
 let us range,  
 Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing  
 grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the  
 younger day;  
 Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age, — for mine I knew not, — help me as  
 when life begun;  
 Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,  
 weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley  
Hall!

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the  
roof-tree fall. 190

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath  
and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thun-  
derbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or  
snow;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

### GODIVA .

*I waited for the train at Coventry;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this: —*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame, 10  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry; for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we starve!"  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
 His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
 A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
 And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax, they starve." 20  
 Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
 "You would not let your little finger ache  
 For such as *these*?" — "But I would die," said she.  
 He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul,  
 Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear:  
 "O, ay, ay, ay, you talk!" — "Alas!" she said,  
 "But prove me what it is I would not do."  
 And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
 He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the town,  
 And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn, 30  
 He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
 As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
 Made war upon each other for an hour,  
 Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
 And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
 The hard condition, but that she would loose  
 The people; therefore, as they loved her well,  
 From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
 No eye look down, she passing, but that all 40  
 Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
 Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
 The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath  
 She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
 Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook her head,  
 And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;  
 Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair  
 Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam slid  
 From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd 50  
 The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity.  
 The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
 And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
 The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
 Had cunning eyes to see; the barking cur  
 Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's footfall shot  
 Light horrors thro' her pulses; the blind walls  
 Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead      60  
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared; but she  
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
 Glean thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.  
 And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
 The fatal byword of all years to come,  
 Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
 Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had their will,  
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,      70  
 And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;  
 And she, that knew not, pass'd; and all at once,  
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  
 One after one; but even then she gain'd  
 Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
 To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
 And built herself an everlasting name.

### SAINT AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon;  
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes;  
 May my soul follow soon!

The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord.  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies, . 10  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
 To yonder shining ground;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be. 20  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
 The flashes come and go;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strows her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within 30  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The Sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One Sabbath deep and wide —  
 A light upon the shining sea —  
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
     My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
     Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
     The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
     The horse and rider reel;  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
     And when the tide of combat stands,                      10  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
     That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
     On whom their favors fall!  
 For them I battle till the end,  
     To save from shame and thrall;  
 But all my heart is drawn above,  
     My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;  
 I never felt the kiss of love,  
     Nor maiden's hand in mine.                                      20  
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
     Me mightier transports move and thrill;  
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
     A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
     A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
     I hear a noise of hymns.  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
     I hear a voice, but none are there;                      30

The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark.  
 I leap on board; no helmsman steers;  
 I float till all is dark. 40  
 A gentle sound, an awful light!  
 Three angels bear the Holy Grail;  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50  
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
 The streets are dumb with snow.  
 The tempest crackles on the leads,  
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;  
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
 And gilds the driving hail.  
 I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
 No branchy thicket shelter yields;  
 But blessed forms in whistling storms  
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight — to me is given  
 Such hope, I know not fear;

I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
     That often meet me here.  
 I muse on joy that will not cease,  
     Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
     Whose odors haunt my dreams;  
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
     This mortal armor that I wear, 70  
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes  
     Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
     And thro' the mountain-walls  
 A rolling organ-harmony  
     Swell up and shakes and falls.  
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
     Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
 "O just and faithful knight of God!  
     Ride on! the prize is near." 80  
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
     By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
     Until I find the Holy Grail.

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid;  
     She was more fair than words can say;  
 Barefooted came the beggar maid  
     Before the king Cophetua.  
 In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
     To meet and greet her on her way;  
 "It is no wonder," said the lords,  
     "She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
 She in her poor attire was seen;  
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been.  
 Cophetua sware a royal oath:  
 "This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

## THE EAGLE

### FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

## "MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH"

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
 Yon orange sunset waning slow;  
 From fringes of the faded eve,  
 O happy planet, eastward go,  
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
 To glass herself in dewy eyes  
 That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
 Dip forward under starry light,  
 And move me to my marriage-morn,  
 And round again to happy night.

“COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD”

COME not, when I am dead,

To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,

And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime

I care no longer, being all unblest:  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie;  
Go by, go by.

TO —

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

“Cursed be he that moves my bones.”

*Shakespeare's Epitaph*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown;  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him ere he scarce be cold  
 Begins the scandal and the cry:

“Proclaim the faults he would not show;  
 Break lock and seal, betray the trust;  
 Keep nothing sacred, 'tis but just  
 The many-headed beast should know.” 20

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier, 30  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd!

“BREAK, BREAK, BREAK —”

BREAK, break, break,  
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
 And I would that my tongue could utter  
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,  
     That he shouts with his sister at play!  
 O, well for the sailor lad,  
     That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
     To their haven under the hill;  
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
     And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
     At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
     Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
     He pass'd by the town and out of the street;  
 A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
     And waves of shadow went over the wheat;  
 And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
     And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
 That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
     And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
     The snake slipt under a spray,  
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
     And stared, with his foot on the prey;  
 And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs  
     But never a one so gay,  
 For he sings of what the world will be  
     When the years have died away."

## THE PRINCESS



### SONGS

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O, we fell out, I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears.  
And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears!  
For when we came where lies the child 10  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O, there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me;  
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon; 10

Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
    Under the silver moon;  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

The splendor falls on castle walls  
    And snowy summits old in story;  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
    And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,  
    And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar  
    The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!                   10  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
    They faint on hill or field or river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
    And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

“O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

“O, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

“O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and thrill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“O, were I thou that she might take me in,     10  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

“Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with  
    love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

“O, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“O, tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,     20  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
    mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

Home they brought her warrior dead;  
    She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
    “*She must weep or she will die.*”

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept, 10  
Took the face-cloth from the face;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee —  
Like summer tempest came her tears —  
“Sweet my child, I live for thee.”

“Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

“Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand;  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves. 10

“Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,  
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; they struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter’d to the shoulder blade.   20

“Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and roll’d  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,  
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
But O too fond, when have I answer’d thee?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
Ask me no more.   10

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal’d;  
I strove against the stream and all in vain;  
Let the great river take me to the main.  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;  
Ask me no more.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;

Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.  
The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

“Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining farrow, as thy thoughts in me. 10

“Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake.  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

“Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain  
height. ~

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),  
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize, 10  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.  
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave 20  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air.  
So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms, 30  
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

## IN MEMORIAM



### SELECTIONS

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,      10  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.      20

We have but faith: we cannot know,  
For knowledge is of things we see;

And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
We mock thee when we do not fear: 30  
But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me.  
What seem'd my worth since I began;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.  
1849.

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I

I held it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss. 10  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
"Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn."

## II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the underlying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale, 10  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run;  
A web is woven across the sky;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun;

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands —  
With all the music in her tone,                   10  
A hollow echo of my own, —  
A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?  
                  .                   .                   .                   .                   .

## V

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;                   10

But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again, 10  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favorable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright 10  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me. 20  
·   ·   ·   ·   ·   ·   ·

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 10  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall,  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm as the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,

And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20  
 . . . . .

## XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak:  
"This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers: "Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain, 10  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?" 20

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;  
Ye never knew the sacred dust.  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged;  
And one is sad; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stolen away.  
    . . . . .

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
Nor any want-begotten rest. 10

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,

## IN MEMORIAM

Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease, 10  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind. .

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry, merry bells of Yule. 20  
. . . . .

### XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

“Where wert thou, brother, those four days?”  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound, 10  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not, or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,      10  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

## XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays  
Her early heaven, her happy views;

Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good. 10  
O, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And even for want of such a type.

## XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose 10  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
 We yield all blessing to the name  
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
 When truth embodied in a tale  
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
 With human hands the creed of creeds 10  
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
 In roarings round the coral reef.

. . . . .

## XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
 And answering now my random stroke  
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
 To thee too comes the golden hour  
 When flower is feeling after flower;  
 But Sorrow, — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —  
 What whisper'd from her lying lips? 10

Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.  
 . . . . .

## XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.  
He still outstript me in the race;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps, 10  
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?  
 . . . . .

## XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside;  
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good. 10  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

## XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;  
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
 But better serves a wholesome law, 10  
 And holds it sin and shame to draw  
 The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
 But rather loosens from the lip  
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

. . . . .

## L

Be near me when my light is low,  
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
 And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring, 10  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith? 10  
There must be wisdom with great Death;  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall;  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

. . . . .

## LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire                   10  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night;  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.                   20

## LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?

So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds, 10  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope. 20

## LVI

"So careful of the type?" but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, "A thousand types are gone;  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me.  
I bring to life, I bring to death;  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes, 10  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law —  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song.  
Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind.  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll 10  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
 Eternal greetings to the dead;  
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
 "Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
 I know that in thy place of rest  
 By that broad water of the west  
 There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
 As slowly steals a silver flame  
 Along the letters of thy name,  
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,  
 From off my bed the moonlight dies;      10  
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn  
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
 And in the dark church like a ghost  
 Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

## LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
 So little done, such things to be,  
 How know I what had need of thee,  
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
 The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:

I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds. 10  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place, 10  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
No single tear, no mark of pain —  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!

No — mixt with all this mystic frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

20

## LXXIX

“More than my brothers are to me,” —

Let this not vex thee, noble heart!

I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,

As moulded like in Nature's mint;

And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd

Thro' all his eddying coves, the same

10

All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,

One lesson from one book we learn'd,

Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,

But he was rich where I was poor,

And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

20

## LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death

For changes wrought on form and face;

No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks;  
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth; 10  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart:  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.  
. . . . .

## LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars 10  
Among the willows; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
 The same, but not the same; and last  
 Up that long walk of limes I past  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door;  
 I linger'd; all within was noise  
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
 That crash'd the glass, and beat the floor; 20

Where once we held debate, a band  
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
 And labor, and the changing mart,  
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
 But send it slackly from the string;  
 And one would pierce an outer ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he  
 Would cleave the mark. A willing ear 30  
 We lent him. Who but hung to hear  
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
 And music in the bounds of law,  
 To those conclusions when we saw  
 The god within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
 In azure orbits, heavenly-wise;  
 And over those ethereal eyes  
 The bar of Michael Angelo. 40

## LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
He mixt in all our simple sports; 10  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears! 20

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray, 30  
 And break the livelong summer day  
 With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
 Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,  
 He loved to rail against it still,  
 For "ground in yonder social mill  
 We rub each other's angles down, 40

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss  
 The picturesque of man and man."  
 We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,  
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;  
 And last, returning from afar,  
 Before the crimson-circled star  
 Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
 We heard behind the woodbine veil 50  
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
 And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

## XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out. 10  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone, 20

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays, 10  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
This laurel, let this holly stand:  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows:  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime; 10  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more? 20

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;      10  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in. 20

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand; 30  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
 The blast of North and East, and ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs 10  
 Above the wood which grides and clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine.  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things even as he were by; 20

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns? 10  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom; 10  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face; 20

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years;  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school 10  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will. 20

## CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call, 10  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye  
Where God and Nature met in light; 20

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

. . . . .

## CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of quick  
 About the flowering squares, and thick  
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
 The flocks are whiter down the vale, 10  
 And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change their sky  
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
 Spring wakens too, and my regret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest. 20

. . . . .

## CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant laboring in his youth;

Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms, 10  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore, 20

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps

I come once more; the city sleeps;  
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine eye;      10  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape      10  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was *born* to other things.

## CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!  
There where the long street roars hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true; 10  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, without;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice, "believe no more," 10  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamor made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near; 20

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,  
She did but look through dimmer eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there;

10

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within the court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
 Who moves about from place to place, 10  
 And whispers to the worlds of space,  
 In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
 Well roars the storm to those that hear  
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
 And justice, even tho' thrice again  
 The red fool-fury of the Seine 20  
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
 And him, the lazar, in his rags! 10  
 They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood,  
 The fortress crashes from on high,  
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
 And the great Aton sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell,  
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
 And smilest, knowing all is well 20

. . . . .

## CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal,

O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeper, darker understood; 10  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now; 10  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved 10  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire: 20

And rise, O moon, from yonder down  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapor sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;  
And breaking let the splendor fall  
To spangle all the happy shores 30

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race 40

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod  
This planet was a noble type 50  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

# MAUD AND OTHER POEMS



## SELECTIONS FROM MAUD

### I

A VOICE by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall!  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife 10  
To the death, for their native land.

### II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

### III

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind 20

With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
 A glory I shall not find.  
 Still! I will hear you no more,  
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
 But to move to the meadow and fall before  
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

Go not, happy day,  
 From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
 Till the maiden yields.

Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.

When the happy Yes

Falters from her lips,

10

Pass and blush the news

Over glowing ships;

Over blowing seas,

Over seas at rest,

Pass the happy news,

Blush it thro' the West;

Till the red man dance

By his red cedar-tree,

And the red man's babe

Leap, beyond the sea.

20

Blush from West to East,

Blush from East to West,

Till the West is East,

Blush it thro' the West.

Rosy is the West,

Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.  
 . . . . .

## I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone;  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky, 10  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
 The flute, violin, bassoon;  
 All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
 To the dancers dancing in tune;  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, "There is but one,  
 With whom she has heart to be gay, 20  
 When will the dancers leave her alone?  
 She is weary of dance and play."

Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day;  
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
 The last wheel echoes away.

## V

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes  
 In babble and revel and wine.  
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
 For one that will never be thine? 30  
 But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,  
 "For ever and ever, mine."

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall;  
 And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs 40  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;

*little red flower*

*acacia  
lake-blossom*

But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me; 50  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate. 60  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate.  
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"  
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"  
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"  
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

## XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthly bed; 70  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead,  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

## I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairily well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

## II

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name. 10  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world? 20

## IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap

The three-decker's oaken spine  
 Athwart the ledges of rock,  
 Here on the Breton strand!

## I

O that 'twere possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again!

## II

When I was wont to meet her  
 In the silent woody places  
 By the home that gave me birth,  
 We stood tranced in long embraces  
 Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter  
 Than anything on earth.

10

## III

A shadow flits before me,  
 Not thou, but like to thee.  
 Ah, Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
 What and where they be!

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
 It lightly winds and steals  
 In a cold white robe before me,  
 When all my spirit reels  
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
 And the roaring of the wheels.

20

## V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies. 30

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendor falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet.

She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings;  
In a moment we shall meet.  
She is singing in the meadow, 40  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## THE BROOK

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river, 10  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles,  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
 By many a field and fallow,  
 And many a fairy foreland set  
 With willow-weed and mallow. 20

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,  
 With here a blossom sailing,  
 And here and there a lusty trout,  
 And here and there a grayling, *etc.*

And here and there a foamy flake  
 Upon me, as I travel 30  
 With many a silvery water-break  
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
 I slide by hazel covers;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers. 40

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
 In brambly wildernesses;  
 I linger by my shingly bars,  
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river, 50  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

## TO THE REVEREND F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
 Godfather, come and see your boy;  
 Your presence will be sun in winter,  
 Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few  
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,

Should eighty thousand college-councils  
Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right, 10

Yet one lay-hearth would give you wel-  
come —

Take it and come — to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown

All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,

And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine; 20

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand,  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin, 30

Dispute the claims, arrange the chances, —  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win;

Or whether war's avenging rod  
 Shall lash all Europe into blood;  
     Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
 Dear to the man that is dear to God, —

How best to help the slender store,  
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor,  
     How gain in life, as life advances,  
 Valor and charity more and more. 40

Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet  
 Is hoar with rime or spongy-wet,  
     But when the wreath of March has blos-  
         som'd, —  
 Crocus, anemone, violet, —

Or later, pay one visit here,  
 For those are few we hold as dear;  
     Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
 Many and many a happy year.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

### I

BURY the Great Duke  
     With an empire's lamentation;  
 Let us bury the Great Duke  
     To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;  
 Mourning when their leaders fall,  
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?  
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
 Let the sound of those he wrought for, 10  
 And the feet of those he fought for,  
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
 As fits an universal woe,  
 Let the long, long procession go,  
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
 And let the mournful martial music blow;  
 The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
 Remembering all his greatness in the past. 20  
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!  
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
 Whole in himself, a common good.  
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
 Great in council and great in war, 30  
 Foremost captain of his time,  
 Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And, as the greatest only are,  
 In his simplicity sublime.  
 O good gray head which all men knew,

O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fallen at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!  
Such was he whom we deplore. 40  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

## v

All is over and done.  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son,  
Let the bell be toll'd.  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river, 50  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold.  
Let the bell be toll'd,  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds.  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd,  
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;  
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd 60  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.  
When he with those deep voices wrought,

Guarding realms and kings from shame,  
 With those deep voices our dead captain taught  
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70  
 In that dread sound to the great name  
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
 In praise and in dispraise the same,  
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
 O civic muse, to such a name,  
 To such a name for ages long,  
 To such a name,  
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
 And ever-echoing avenues of song!

## VI

“Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest, 80  
 With banner and with music, with soldier and with  
 priest,  
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?” —  
 Mighty Seaman, this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea.  
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,  
 The greatest sailor since our world began.  
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
 For this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea. 90  
 His foes were thine; he kept us free;  
 O, give him welcome, this is he  
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
 And worthy to be laid by thee;  
 For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun;  
 This is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won; 100  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms, 110  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England p'during on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close.  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings, 120  
And barking for the thrones of kings;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;  
A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square,  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and overthrew. 130  
So great a soldier taught us there  
What long-enduring hearts could do

In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
 If aught of things that here befall  
 Touch a spirit among things divine,  
 If love of country move thee there at all, 140  
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!  
 And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
 In full acclaim,  
 A people's voice,  
 The proof and echo of all human fame,  
 A people's voice, when they rejoice  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 Attest their great commander's claim  
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
 Eternal honor to his name. 150

# VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,  
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,  
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
 His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,  
 We have a voice with which to pay the debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
 To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul 160  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there springs

Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!  
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,  
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.  
But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170  
Remember him who led your hosts;  
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;  
His voice is silent in your council-hall  
For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
For ever silent; even if they broke  
In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;  
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power; 180  
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow  
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;  
Whose life was work, whose language rife  
With rugged maxims hewn from life;  
Who never spoke against a foe;  
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.  
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;  
Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
Whatever record leap to light 190  
He never shall be shamed.

## VIII

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,

And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
Yea, let all good things await

Him who cares not to be great

But as he saves or serves the state.

200

Not once or twice in our rough island-story

The path of duty was the way to glory.

He that walks it, only thirsting

For the right, and learns to deaden

Love of self, before his journey closes,

He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting

Into glossy purples, which outreden

All voluptuous garden-roses.

Not once or twice in our fair island-story

The path of duty was the way to glory.

210

He, that ever following her commands,

On with toil of heart and knees and hands,

Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won

His path upward, and prevail'd,

Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands

To which our God Himself is moon and sun.

Such was he: his work is done.

But while the races of mankind endure

Let his great example stand

220

Colossal, seen of every land,

And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;

Till in all lands and thro' all human story

The path of duty be the way to glory.

And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame

For many and many an age proclaim

At civic revel and pomp and game,

And when the long-illumined cities flame,

Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,

With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,

230

Eternal honor to his name.

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see.  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung.  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung. 240  
Ours the pain, be his the gain!  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free,  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane: 250  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore 260  
Make and break, and work their will,  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers,

And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.  
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;  
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;  
The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; 270  
He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
Gone, but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him, 280  
God accept him, Christ receive him!

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

### I

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
“Forward the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!” he said.  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### II

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”  
Was there a man dismay'd?

Not tho' the soldier knew  
     Some one had blunder'd.  
 Theirs not to make reply,  
 Theirs not to reason why,  
 Theirs but to do and die.  
 Into the valley of Death  
     Rode the six hundred.

## III

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon in front of them 20  
     Volley'd and thunder'd;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 Boldly they rode and well,  
 Into the jaws of Death,  
 Into the mouth of hell  
     Rode the six hundred.

## IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
 Sabring the gunners there,  
 Charging an army, while 30  
     All the world wonder'd.  
 Plunged in the battery-smoke  
 Right thro' the line they broke;  
 Cossack and Russian  
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
     Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
 Then they rode back, but not,  
     Not the six hundred.

## V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them, 40  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade? 50  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honor the charge they made!  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

# ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS



## NORTHERN FARMER

### OLD STYLE

#### I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?  
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy, Doctor's abeän  
    an' agoän;  
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle, but I beänt a fool;  
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

#### II

—  
Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways  
    true;  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.  
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty  
    year.

#### III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere o' my bed.  
"The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,"  
    a said, 10  
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were due, an' I gied  
    it in hond;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

#### IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.

Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch  
 an' staäte,  
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur  
 deäd,  
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock  
 ower my 'eäd,  
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad  
 summut to saäy,  
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd  
 awaäy. 20

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun under-  
 stond;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an'  
 freeä:  
 "The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,"  
 says 'eä.  
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in  
 'aäste;  
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd  
 Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was  
 not born then;  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysén;



An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear, a' dear!  
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty  
year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'ääpoth o'  
sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver mended a  
fence; 50  
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now,  
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a  
passin' boy,  
Says to thessén, naw doubt, "What a man a beä  
sewer-lo!"  
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin' fust a  
coom'd to the 'All;  
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy  
hall.

XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to  
wroite,  
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles  
ma quoit;  
Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,  
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the  
stoäns. 60

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle  
o' steäm  
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälts wi' the divil's  
oän teäm.

Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to  
 see it.

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the  
 aäle?

Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;  
 I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor  
 a floy;

Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## NEW STYLE

## I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters  
 awaäy?

Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears  
 'em saäy.

Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's an ass  
 for thy päins;

Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs, nor in all thy  
 braäns.

## II

Woä — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's  
 parson's 'ouse —

Dosn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man  
 or a mouse?

Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to  
 weeäk.

Proputty, proputty — woä then, woä — let ma 'ear  
 mysén speak.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;  
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a-tellin' it  
me. 10

Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo'  
parson's lass —

Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we boäth on us  
thinks tha an ass.

IV

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by — Saäint's-daäy — they was  
ringing the bells.

She's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä is scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty? — the  
flower as blaws.

But propuppy, propuppy sticks, an' propuppy, propuppy  
grows.

V

Do'ant be stunt; taäke time. I knaws what maäkes  
tha sa mad.

Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a  
lad?

But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma  
this:

“Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny  
is!” 20

VI

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy muther coom to  
'and,

Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.  
Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv it a thowt —  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as  
'ant nowt?

## VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's  
 deäd,  
 Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle her  
 breäd.  
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver get  
 hissén clear,  
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to  
 the shere.

## VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity  
 debt,  
 Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em  
 yet. 30  
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im  
 a shove,  
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd yowe; fur, Sammy, 'e mar-  
 ried fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er  
 munny too,  
 Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they've good right to do.  
 Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd  
 by?  
 Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it; reäson  
 why.

## X

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
 Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we boäth on us thinks  
 tha an ass.  
 Woä then, proputtly, wiltha? — an ass as near as mays  
 nowt — 39  
 Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as fell as owt.

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the  
fence!

Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins  
an' pence?

Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm  
blest

If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the  
best.

XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an'  
steäls,

Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their reg-  
ular meäls.

Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be  
'ad.

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is  
bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy  
lot,

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny  
was got. 50

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un,  
'e did.

XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out  
by the 'ill!

Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;  
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;  
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

## XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I meäns to  
stick;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to  
Dick. —

Coom oop, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears  
'im saäy —

Proputty, proputty, proputty — canter an' canter  
awaäy. 60

## EXPERIMENTS

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of  
Homer!

No — but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in  
England?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?  
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

## MILTON

## (ALCAICS)

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,

O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,

God-gifted organ-voice of England,

Milton, a name to resound for ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,

Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,

Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean

Rings to the roar of an angel onset!

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring, 10  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN  
 BLANK VERSE

(*Iliad*, VIII. 542-561)

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd applause;  
 Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his own;  
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine  
 And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.  
 And these all night upon the bridge of war  
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed. 10  
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,  
 And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
 And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
 Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart;  
 So many a fire between the ships and stream  
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,  
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each  
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire; 20  
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,  
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,  
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless  
 sea —

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the  
 wrong —

Nay, but he aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory  
 she;

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be  
 dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of the  
 worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the  
 just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer  
 sky;

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die. 10

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and  
 the plains, —

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not that which He  
 seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in  
 dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
 Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from  
 Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason why,  
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I  
am I" ?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy  
doom,  
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendor and  
gloom. 10

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with  
Spirit can meet —  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands  
and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,  
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a  
pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man  
cannot see;  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not  
He?

### "FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower — but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

# IDYLLS OF THE KING



## DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory — since he held them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me  
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
"Who revered his conscience as his king;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;  
Who loved one only and who clave to her —" 10  
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him; he is gone.  
We know him now; all narrow jealousies  
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that; 20  
Not making his high place the lawless perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,

In that fierce light which beats upon a throne  
And blackens every blot; for where is he  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?  
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons 30  
Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her poor —  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —  
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed, 40  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;  
Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that star  
Which shone so close beside thee that ye made  
One light together, but has past and leaves  
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,  
The love of all thy sons encompass thee, 50  
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,  
The love of all thy people comfort thee,  
Till God's love set thee at his side again!

## GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat  
 There in the holy house at Almesbury  
 Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
 A novice. One low light betwixt them burn'd  
 Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
 Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
 The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
 Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight  
 Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast 10  
 Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
 Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For this  
 He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
 With silent smiles of slow disparagement;  
 And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,  
 Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought  
 To make disruption in the Table Round  
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
 Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims  
 Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot. 20

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,  
 Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,  
 Had been — their wont — a-maying and return'd,  
 That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,  
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
 Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court  
 The wiliest and the worst; and more than this  
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by 30

Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd with dust,  
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and these  
Full knightly without scorn. For in those days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;      40  
But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, in him  
By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp  
To raise the prince, who rising twice or thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went;  
But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long      50  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd  
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries,  
"I shudder, some one steps across my grave;"  
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.      60  
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,

Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.  
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear — 70  
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls —  
Held her awake; or if she slept she dream'd  
An awful dream, for then she seem'd to stand  
On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
Before it till it touch'd her, and she turn'd —  
When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet, 80  
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it  
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
And all this trouble did not pass but grew,  
Till even the clear face of the guileless King,  
And trustful courtesies of household life,  
Became her bane; and at the last she said:  
"O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,  
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again some evil chance  
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze  
Before the people and our lord the King." 91  
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
And still they met and met. Again she said,  
"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."  
And then they were agreed upon a night —  
When the good King should not be there — to meet

And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.  
She told Sir Modred. Passion-palè they met  
And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye,  
Low on the border of her couch they sat 100  
Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony; and crying with full voice,  
"Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last," aroused  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell  
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,  
And all was still. Then she, "The end is come,  
And I am shamed for ever;" and he said: 110  
"Mine be the shame, mine was the sin; but rise,  
And fly to my strong castle over-seas.  
There will I hide thee till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the world."  
She answer'd: "Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?  
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!  
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary, 120  
And bide my doom." So Lancelot got her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping; for he past,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,  
And heard the spirits of the waste and weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan.  
And in herself she moan'd, "Too late, too late!" 130



Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,  
"O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."  
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!  
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we; for that we do repent,  
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.      170  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!  
O, let us in, that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?  
O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling to her:      181

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;  
But let my words — the words of one so small,  
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given —  
Comfort your sorrows, for they do not flow  
From evil done; right sure am I of that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,  
And weighing find them less; for gone is he      190

To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,  
 Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;  
 And Modred whom he left in charge of all,  
 The traitor — Ah, sweet lady, the King's grief  
 For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,  
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours!     .  
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not great;  
 For if there ever come a grief to me  
 I cry my cry in silence, and have done;  
 None knows it, and my tears have brought me good.  
 But even were the griefs of little ones                             201  
 As great as those of great ones, yet this grief  
 Is added to the griefs the great must bear,  
 That, howsoever much they may desire  
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud;  
 As even here they talk at Almesbury  
 About the good King and his wicked Queen,  
 And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
 Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
 But were I such a King it could not be."                     210

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,  
 "Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?"  
 But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,  
 If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
 Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this all is woman's grief,  
 That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
 Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
 Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
 With signs and miracles and wonders, there                     220  
 At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,  
“Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?”  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
“O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?”

To whom the little novice garrulously:  
“Yea, but I know; the land was full of signs                    230  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table — at the founding of it,  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he said  
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,  
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,                    240  
He saw them — headland after headland flame  
Far on into the rich heart of the west.  
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro’ all the land,  
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
So said my father — yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods  
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy                    250  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed.  
And still at evenings on before his horse

The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
 Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
 And when at last he came to Camelot,  
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;      260  
 And in the hall itself was such a feast  
 As never man had dream'd; for every knight  
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
 By hands unseen; and even as he said  
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
 While the wine ran; so glad were spirits and men  
 Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,  
 "Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,      270  
 Spirits and men. Could none of them foresee,  
 Not even thy wise father with his signs  
 And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again:  
 "Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father said,  
 Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
 Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
 Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;  
 And many a mystic lay of life and death  
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,      280  
 When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
 With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.  
 So said my father — and that night the bard  
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King  
 As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those  
 Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs.

For there was no man knew from whence he came;  
But after tempest, when the long wave broke  
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,  
There came a day as still as heaven, and then 290  
They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,  
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approven King;  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth; and could he find  
A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the world.  
But even in the middle of his song 300  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fallen,  
But that they stay'd him up; nor would he tell  
His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen, "Lo! they have set her on,  
Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,  
To play upon me," and bow'd her head nor spake.  
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,  
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously, 310  
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue  
Full often, "and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told me, check me too  
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,

And left me; but of others who remain, 320  
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy —  
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss —  
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved  
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her:  
 "Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
 In open battle or the tilting-field 330  
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;  
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
 Of loyal nature and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit?  
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold  
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
 The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:  
 "O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls, 340  
 What knowest thou of the world and all its lights  
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?  
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,  
 And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;  
 But I should all as soon believe that his,  
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,

As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be      350  
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would  
    heal;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried:  
"Such as thou art be never maiden more  
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress!" When that storm of anger brake  
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,      360  
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen  
As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
And when the Queen had added, "Get thee hence!"  
Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself: "The simple, fearful child  
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,  
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent!      370  
For what is true repentance but in thought —  
Not even in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us?  
And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more."

And even in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,

Ambassador, to yield her to his lord 380  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, — for the time  
Was may-time, and as yet no sin was dream'd, —  
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,  
And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale 390  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,  
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw the King 400  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him.  
“Not like my Lancelot” — while she brooded thus  
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry, “The King!” She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors 410  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,  
And grovell'd with her face against the floor.

There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from the King,  
And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the King's:

“Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame? 420  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence I come — from  
him, 430  
From waging bitter war with him; and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight. But many a knight was slain;  
And many more and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred raised revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me. 440  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.

Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my death.  
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.  
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,  
That I the King should greatly care to live;  
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life. 450  
Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.  
For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed  
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.  
But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair Order of my Table Round, 460  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honor his own word as if his God's, 470  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man. 480  
And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
Believing, 'Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!'  
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;  
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;  
Then others, following these my mightiest knights,  
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,  
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine 490  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,  
Not greatly care to lose; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my knights,  
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.  
For which of us who might be left could speak  
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?  
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk 500  
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
And I should evermore be vexed with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,  
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake, 510  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
Whom he knows false abide and rule the house:

Her being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,  
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps  
 The festivity of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns! 520  
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
 The mockery of my people and their bane!"

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch  
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd  
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;  
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere, 530  
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,  
 The doom of treason and the flaming death, —  
 When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is past.  
 The pang — which, while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.  
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I, 540  
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
 Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play

Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —  
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the King's.  
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh, 550  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own  
flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,  
'I loathe thee;' yet not less, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
So far that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure 560  
We two may meet before high God, and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow.  
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man they call  
My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues 570  
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,  
Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more —  
Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head  
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest. 580

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found  
The casement: "peradventure," so she thought,  
"If I might see his face, and not be seen."  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door;  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon clung 590  
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.  
And even then he turn'd; and more and more  
The moony vapor rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray  
And grayer, till himself became as mist 600  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud,  
"O Arthur!" there her voice brake suddenly,  
Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff  
Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —  
Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone — my lord!

Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!

And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell. 610  
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,  
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?  
The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution. He, the King,  
Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill myself?  
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,  
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.  
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
The months will add themselves and make the years,  
The years will roll into the centuries, 621  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
Let the world be; that is but of the world —  
What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,  
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;  
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
My wickedness to him, and left me hope 630  
That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
To which I would not or I could not climb —  
I thought I could not breathe in the fine air, 640  
That pure severity of perfect light —  
I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found

In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
 Now — ere he goes to the great battle? none!  
 Myself must tell him in the purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair world, 650  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest;  
 It surely was my profit had I known;  
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another."

#### Here her hand

Grasp'd made her vail her eyes. She look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,  
 "Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?"  
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns 660  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed  
 Within her, and she wept with these and said:

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the King.  
 O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying, 'Shame!'  
 I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you; 670  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,

But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;  
Do each low office of your holy house;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;  
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;  
And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer 681  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day  
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said. They took her to themselves; and she  
Still hoping, fearing "Is it yet too late?"  
Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died,  
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,  
And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,  
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived 690  
For three brief years, and there, an abbess, past  
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

## BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

• • •

### RUFAN

17—

i

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea —  
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out  
to me!"

Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I  
cannot go?

For the dawns are as bright as day, and the full moon  
stares at the snow.

ii

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of  
the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing  
over the down.

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the  
creek of the chain.

And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself  
drenched with the rain.

iii

Anything fallen again? nay — what was there left to fall?  
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones,  
I have hidden them all. 10

What am I saying, and what are you? do you come as  
a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so  
must it lie.

## IV

Who let her in? how long has she been? you — what  
have you heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a  
word.

O — to pray with me — yes — a lady — none of their  
spies —

But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to  
darken my eyes.

## V

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what should *you*  
know of the night,

The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost  
and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep — you were only  
made for the day.

I have gather'd my baby together — and now you  
may go your way. 20

## VI

Nay — for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old  
dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour  
of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to  
die.

“They dared me to do it,” he said, and he never has  
told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was  
but a child —

“The farmer dared me to do it,” he said; he was  
always so wild —

And idle — and couldn't be idle — my Willy — he  
never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier, he would  
have been one of his best.

## VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never  
would let him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore  
that he would; 30

And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when  
all was done

He flung it among his fellows — “I'll none of it,” said  
my son.

## VIII

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told  
them my tale,

God's own truth — but they kill'd him, they kill'd him  
for robbing the mail.

They hang'd him in chains for a show — we had  
always borne a good name —

To be hang'd for a thief — and then put away — isn't  
that enough shame?

Dust to dust — low down — let us hide! but they set  
him so high

That all the ships of the world could stare at him,  
passing by.

God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls  
of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him  
and hang'd him there. 40

## IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last  
good-bye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. "O mother!"  
I heard him cry.  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something fur-  
ther to say,  
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me  
away.

## X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that  
was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me down  
on my bed.  
"Mother, O mother!" — he call'd in the dark to me  
year after year —  
They beat me for that, they beat me — you know that  
I couldn't but hear;  
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid  
and still  
They let me abroad again — but the creatures had  
worked their will. 50

## XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was  
left —  
I stole them all from the lawyers — and you, will you  
call it a theft? —  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that  
had laughed and had cried —  
Theirs? O, no! they are mine — not theirs — they had  
moved in my side.

## XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em,  
I buried 'em all —  
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night by the  
churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judg-  
ment 'ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy  
ground.

## XIII

They would scratch him up — they would hang him  
again on the cursed tree.  
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know — let all that be, 60  
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's goodwill  
toward men —  
“Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord” — let me  
hear it again;  
“Full of compassion and mercy — long-suffering.”  
Yes, O, yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder — the Saviour  
lives but to bless.  
*He'll* never put on the black cap except for the worst of  
the worst,  
And the first may be last — I have heard it in church  
— and the last may be first.  
Suffering — O, long-suffering — yes, as the Lord must  
know,  
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower  
and the snow.

## XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never  
repented his sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of  
his kin? 70

Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the  
downs began,

The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill  
moan like a man?

## XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation — it's all very well.  
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in  
hell.

For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has  
look'd into my care,

And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I  
know not where.

## XVI

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is all your  
desire —

Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone  
to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you may  
leave me alone —

You never have borne a child — you are just as hard  
as a stone. 80

## XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to  
be kind,

But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice  
in the wind —

The snow and the sky so bright — he used but to call  
in the dark,  
And he calls to me now from the church and not from  
the gibbet — for hark!  
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is coming —  
shaking the walls —  
Willy — the moon's in a cloud —— Good-night. I am  
going. He calls.

## THE REVENGE

### I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,  
And a pinnacle, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from  
far away:  
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-  
three!"  
Then swore Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am  
no coward;  
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of  
gear,  
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow  
quick.  
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-  
three?"

### II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are  
no coward;  
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.  
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick  
ashore. 10  
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my  
Lord Howard,  
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

## III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that  
day,  
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;  
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from  
the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And he laid them on the ballast down below;  
For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not  
left to Spain, 20  
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the  
Lord.

## IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to  
fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came  
in sight,  
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather  
bow.  
“Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
For to fight is but to die!  
There’ll be little of us left by the time this sun be  
set.”  
And Sir Richard said again: “We be all good English  
men.  
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the  
devil, 30  
For I never turn’d my back upon Don or devil  
yet.”

## V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a  
hurrah, and so  
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,  
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick  
below;  
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left  
were seen,  
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane  
between.

## VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their  
decks and laugh'd,  
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad  
little craft  
Running on and on, till delay'd  
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hun-  
dred tons, 40  
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning  
tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

## VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us  
like a cloud  
Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,  
Four galleons drew away  
From the Spanish fleet that day,  
And two upon the larboard and two upon the star-  
board lay,  
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

## VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself  
and went, 50  
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;  
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us  
hand to hand,  
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and mus-  
queteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that  
shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the land.

## IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far  
over the summer sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and  
the fifty-three.  
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built  
galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-  
thunder and flame;  
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with  
her dead and her shame. 60  
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so  
could fight us no more —  
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world  
before?

## X

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;  
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer  
night was gone,

With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly  
    dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the  
    head,  
And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

## XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far  
    over the summer sea, 70  
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us  
    all in a ring;  
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that  
    we still could sting,  
So they watch'd what the end would be.  
And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,  
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate  
    strife;  
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them  
    stark and cold,  
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder  
    was all of it spent; 80  
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the  
    side;  
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:  
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night  
As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a day less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die — does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split her  
in twain!  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of  
Spain!" 90

## XII

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the seamen made  
reply:  
"We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let  
us go;  
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."  
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the  
foe.

## XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him  
then,  
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard  
caught at last,  
And they praised him to his face with their courtly for-  
eign grace;  
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried: 100  
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man  
and true;  
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do.  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"  
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

## XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant  
and true,  
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap

That he dared her with one little ship and his English  
few;  
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,  
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep,  
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien  
crew, 110  
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;  
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke  
from sleep,  
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,  
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,  
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-  
quake grew,  
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their  
masts and their flags,  
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shat-  
ter'd navy of Spain,  
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island  
crag  
To be lost evèrmore in the main.

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

### I

BANNER of England, not for a season, O banner of  
Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!  
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd  
thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Luck-  
now —  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised  
thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

## II

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we  
held with our lives —

Women and children among us, God help them, our  
children and wives!

Hold it we might — and for fifteen days or for twenty  
at most.

“Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at  
his post!” 10

Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the  
best of the brave;

Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him — we laid  
him that night in his grave.

“Every man die at his post!” and there hail'd on our  
houses and halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their  
cannon-balls,

Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our  
slight barricade,

Death while we stood with the musket, and death  
while we stoopt to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for  
often there fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot  
and their shell,

Death — for their spies were among us, their marks-  
men were told of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that  
could think for the rest; 20

Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would  
rain at our feet —

Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled  
us round —

Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth  
of a street,  
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace,  
and death in the ground!  
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and  
creep thro' the hole!  
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him — the  
murderous mole!  
Quiet, ah! quiet — wait till the point of the pickaxe  
be thro'!  
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again  
than before —  
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is  
no more;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew! 30

## III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it  
chanced on a day  
Soon as the blast of that underground thunder-clap  
echo'd away,  
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many  
fiends in their hell —  
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell  
upon yell —  
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.  
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder.  
Guard the Redan!  
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate!  
storm, and it ran  
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side  
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily drown'd by  
the tide —

So many thousands that, if they be bold enough, who  
shall escape? 40  
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are  
soldiers and men!  
Ready! take aim at their leaders — their masses are  
gapp'd with our grape —  
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave fling-  
ing forward again,  
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could  
not subdue;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England  
blew.

## IV

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart  
and in limb,  
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to  
obey, to endure,  
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but  
on him;  
Still — could we watch at all points? we were every  
day fewer and fewer.  
There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that  
past: 50  
“Children and wives — if the tigers leap into the fold  
unawares —  
Every man die at his post — and the foe may outlive  
us at last —  
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall  
into theirs!”  
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy  
sprung  
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor pal-  
isades.

Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your  
hand be as true!  
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank  
fusillades —  
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to  
which they had clung,  
Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them  
with hand-grenades;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of Eng-  
land blew.

60

## V

Then on another wild morning another wild earth-  
quake out-tore  
Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good  
paces or more.  
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the light  
of the sun —  
One has leapt up on the breach, crying out: "Follow  
me, follow me!" —  
Mark him — he falls! then another, and *him* too, and  
down goes he.  
Had they been bold enough then, who can tell but the  
traitors had won?  
Boardings and rafters and doors — an embrasure!  
make way for the gun!  
Now double-charge it with grape! It is charged and  
we fire, and they run.  
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face  
have his due!  
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us,  
faithful and few,

70

Fought with the bravest among us, and drove them,  
and smote them, and slew,  
That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India  
blew.

## VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do.  
We can fight!  
But to be soldier all day, and be sentinel all thro' the  
night —  
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying  
alarms,  
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and  
soundings to arms,  
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,  
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,  
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loop-  
holes around,  
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the  
ground, 80  
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract  
skies,  
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,  
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an Eng-  
lish field,  
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not  
be heal'd,  
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —  
Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save  
us a life.  
Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,  
Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,  
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment  
for grief,

Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,  
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that  
we knew — 91

Then day and night, day and night, coming down on  
the still-shatter'd walls

Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-  
balls —

But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England  
blew.

## VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by  
the scout,

Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the  
fell mutineers?

Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our  
ears!

All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,  
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquer-  
ing cheers,

Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children  
come out, 100

Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good  
fusileers,

Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet  
with their tears!

Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it  
you? is it you?

Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing  
of heaven!

“Hold it for fifteen days!” we have held it for eighty-  
seven!

And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of  
England blew.

## DE PROFUNDIS

## I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy light —  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,  
And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
With this last moon, this crescent — her dark orb  
Touch'd with earth' slight — thou comest, darling  
boy; 10

Our own; a babe in lineament and limb  
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;  
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,  
Indissolubly married like our love.  
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
This mortal race thy kin so well that men  
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life  
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may  
The fated channel where thy motion lives  
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course 20  
Along the years of haste and random youth  
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full man;  
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,  
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

## II

## I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that great deep, before our world begins,  
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that true world within the world we see, 30  
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —  
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun  
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

## II

For in the world which is not ours They said,  
“Let us make man,” and that which should be man,  
From that one light no man can look upon,  
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons  
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit, half-lost  
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign 40  
That thou art thou — who wailest being born  
And banish’d into mystery, and the pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world  
Among the numerable-innumerable  
Sun, sun, and sun, thro’ finite-infinite space  
In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil  
And shatter’d phantom of that infinite One,  
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself  
Out of His whole World-self and all in all —  
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape 50  
And ivy-berry, choose; and still depart  
From death to death thro’ life and life, and find  
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought  
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,

But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
With power on thine own act and on the world.

## THE HUMAN CRY

## I

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halleluiah!  
Infinite Ideality!  
Immeasurable Reality!  
Infinite Personality!  
Hallowed be Thy Name — Halleluiah!

## II

We feel we are nothing — for all is Thou and in Thee;  
We feel we are something — *that* also has come from  
Thee;  
We know we are nothing — but Thou wilt help us to  
be.  
Hallowed be Thy Name — Halleluiah!

## TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

∴

### TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange,  
Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile;  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree  
And watch your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand, and knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares 10  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers;  
Who live on milk and meal and grass;  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,  
And seem'd at first "a thing enskied,"  
As Shakespeare has it, airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual height  
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again 20  
One night when earth was winter-black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;  
And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,  
And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there roll'd  
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes  
Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold

Without, and warmth within me, wrought  
To mould the dream; but none can say 30  
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought  
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well;  
A planet equal to the sun  
Which cast it, that large infidel  
Your Omar; and your Omar drew  
Full-handed plaudits from our best  
In modern letters, and from two,  
Old friends outvaluing all the rest, 40  
Two voices heard on earth no more;  
But we old friends are still alive,  
And I am nearing seventy-four,  
While you have touch'd at seventy-five,  
And so I send a birthday line  
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt  
In some forgotten book of mine  
With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
And dating many a year ago,  
Has hit on this, which you will take, 50  
My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,  
Less for its own than for the sake  
Of one recalling gracious times,  
When, in our younger London days,  
You found some merit in my rhymes,  
And I more pleasure in your praise.

## THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE

### PROLOGUE TO GENERAL HAMLEY

OUR birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,

While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You came, and look'd and loved the view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea;  
And, gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been 10  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen;  
And now — like old-world inns that take  
Some warrior for a sign  
That therewithin a guest may make  
True cheer with honest wine —  
Because you heard the lines I read  
Nor utter'd word of blame,  
I dare without your leave to head  
These rhymings with your name, 20  
Who know you but as one of those  
I fain would meet again,  
Yet know you, as your England knows  
That you and all your men  
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
When, in the vanish'd year,  
You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,  
And Wolseley overthrew 30  
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
Paled, and the glory grew.

## THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

## I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy  
Brigade!

Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,  
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley — and  
stay'd;

For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding  
by

When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;  
And he call'd, "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd  
and obey'd.

Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew  
not why,

And he turn'd half round, and he bade his trumpeter  
sound

To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his  
blade

To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never  
die —

10

"Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,  
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

## II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of  
the fight!

Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the  
height,

With a wing push'd out to the left and a wing to the  
right,

And who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd up  
alone

Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
 Like an Englishman there and then.  
 All in a moment follow'd with force 20  
 Three that were next in their fiery course,  
 Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,  
 Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had  
     made —  
 Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,  
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

## III

Fell like a cannon-shot,  
 Burst like a thunderbolt,  
 Crash'd like a hurricane,  
 Broke thro' the mass from below,  
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe, 30  
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
 Rode flashing blow upon blow.  
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
 Whirling their sabres in circles of light!  
 And some of us, all in amaze,  
 Who were held for a while from the fight,  
 And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud, — 40  
 O, mad for the charge and the battle were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank from sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering, all dis-  
     may'd,  
 "Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Bri-  
     gade!"

## IV

“Lost one and all” were the words  
Mutter’d in our dismay;  
But they rode like victors and lords  
Thro’ the forest of lances and swords  
In the heart of the Russian hordes, 50  
They rode, or they stood at bay —  
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
Down with the bridle-hand drew  
The foe from the saddle and threw  
Underfoot there in the fray —  
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
In the wave of a stormy day;  
Till suddenly shock upon shock  
Stagger’d the mass from without,  
Drove it in wild disarray, 60  
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,  
And the foeman surged, and waver’d, and reel’d  
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,  
And over the brow and away.

## V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they  
made!  
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!

## EPILOGUE

## IRENE

Not this way will you set your name  
A star among the stars.

## POET

What way?

## IRENE

You praise when you should blame  
 The barbarism of wars.  
 A juster epoch has begun.

## POET

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
 And that bright hair the modern sun,  
 Those eyes the blue to-day,  
 You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
 I would that wars should cease, 10  
 I would the globe from end to end  
 Might sow and reap in peace,  
 And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
 Or Trade refrain the Powers  
 From war with kindly links of gold,  
 Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
 Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
 My friends and brother souls,  
 With all the peoples, great and small,  
 That wheel between the poles. 20  
 But since our mortal shadow, Ill,  
 To waste this earth began —  
 Perchance from some abuse of Will  
 In worlds before the man  
 Involving ours — he needs must fight  
 To make true peace his own,  
 He needs must combat might with might,  
 Or Might would rule alone;  
 And who loves war for war's own sake  
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse; 30  
 But let the patriot-soldier take  
 His meed of fame in verse;

Nay — tho' that realm were in the wrong  
For which her warriors bleed,  
It still were right to crown with song  
The warrior's noble deed —  
A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
For so the deed endures;  
But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
And that large phrase of yours 40  
"A star among the stars," my dear,  
Is girlish talk at best;  
For dare we dally with the sphere  
As he did half in jest,  
Old Horace? "I will strike," said he,  
"The stars with head sublime,"  
But scarce could see, as now we see,  
The man in space and time,  
So drew perchance a happier lot 50  
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
The fires that arch this dusky dot —  
Yon myriad-worlded way —  
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
World-isles in lonely skies,  
Whole heavens within themselves, amaze  
Our brief humanities.  
And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
Tho' carved in harder stone —  
The falling drop will make his name  
As mortal as my own. 60

IRENE

No!

POET

Let it live then — ay, till when?  
Earth passes, all is lost

In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
 Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
 And deed and song alike are swept  
 Away, and all in vain  
 As far as man can see, except  
 The man himself remain;  
 And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
 Too many a voice may cry 70  
 That man can have no after-morn,  
 Not yet of those am I.  
 The man remains, and whatsoe'er  
 He wrought of good or brave  
 Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
 That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art  
 Not all in vain may plead  
 "The song that nerves a nation's heart  
 Is in itself a deed." 80

## TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS FOR THE  
 NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

### I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,  
 Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
 wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

### II

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
 more than he that sang the "Works and Days,"  
 All the chosen coin of fancy  
 flashing out from many a golden phrase;

## III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
    tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
    often flowering in a lonely word;

## IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
    piping underneath his beechen bowers;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
    whom the laughing shepherd bound with  
    flowers;

## V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
    in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
    unlaborious earth and oarless sea; 10

## VI

Thou that seest Universal  
    Nature moved by Universal Mind;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
    at the doubtful doom of human kind;

## VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;  
    star that gildest yet this phantom shore;  
Golden branch amid the shadows,  
    kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

## VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
    fallen every purple Cæsar's dome —

Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
 sound forever of Imperial Rome —

## IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
 and the Rome of freemen holds her place,  
 I, from out the Northern Island  
 sunder'd once from all the human race,

## X

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
 I that loved thee since my day began,  
 Wielder of the stateliest measure  
 ever moulded by the lips of man. 20

## THE DEAD PROPHET

## I

DEAD! ~  
 And the Muses cried with a stormy cry,  
 "Send them no more, for evermore.  
 Let the people die."

## II

Dead!  
 "Is it *he* then brought so low?"  
 And a careless people flock'd from the fields  
 With a purse to pay for the show.

## III

Dead, who had served his time,  
 Was one of the people's kings, 10  
 Had labor'd in lifting them out of slime,  
 And showing them, souls have wings!

## IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
His friends had stript him bare,  
And roll'd his nakedness every way  
That all the crowd might stare.

## V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
On its barkless bones, stood stark by the dead;  
And behind him, low in the West, 20

## VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,  
And blurr'd in color and form,  
The sun hung over the gates of night,  
And glared at a coming storm.

## VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,  
That on dumb death had thriven;  
They call'd her "Reverence" here upon earth,  
And "The Curse of the Prophet" in heaven.

## VIII

She knelt — "We worship him" — all but wept —  
"So great, so noble, was he!" 30  
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept  
The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX

"Great! for he spoke and the people heard,  
And his eloquence caught like a flame  
From zone to zone of the world, till his word  
Had won him a noble name.

## X

“Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound ran ,  
Thro’ palace and cottage door,  
For he touch’d on the whole sad planet of man,  
The kings and the rich and the poor; 40

## XI

“And he sung not alone of an old sun set,  
But a sun coming up in his youth!  
Great and noble — O, yes — but yet —  
For man is a lover of truth,

## XII

“And bound to follow, wherever she go  
Stark-naked, and up or down,  
Thro’ her high hill-passes of stainless snow,  
Or the foulest sewer of the town —

## XIII

“Noble and great — O, ay — but then,  
Tho’ a prophet should have his due, 50  
Was he noblier-fashion’d than other men?  
Shall we see to it, I and you?

## XIV

“For since he would sit on a prophet’s seat,  
As a lord of the human soul,  
We needs must scan him from head to feet,  
Were it but for a wart or a mole?”

## XV

His wife and his child stood by him in tears,  
But she — she push’d them aside.  
“Tho’ a name may last for a thousand years,  
Yet a truth is a truth,” she cried. 60

## XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway still,  
 Had often truckled and cower'd  
 When he rose in his wrath, and had yielded her will  
 To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.  
 "Small blemish upon the skin!  
 But I think we know what is fair without  
 Is often as foul within."

## XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from part,  
 And out of his body she drew 70  
 The red "blood-eagle" of liver and heart;  
 She held them up to the view;

## XIX .

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
 And all the people were pleased;  
 "See, what a little heart," she said,  
 "And the liver is half-diseased!"

## XX

She tore the prophet after death,  
 And the people paid her well.  
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;  
 One shriek'd, "The fires of hell!" 80

## "FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!  
 So they row'd, and there we landed — "O venusta Sir-  
 mio!"

There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer  
 glow,  
 There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flow-  
 ers grow,  
 Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's hopeless  
 woe,  
 Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,  
 "Frater Ave atque Vale" — as we wander'd to and fro  
 Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below  
 Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

### HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn night,  
 Then drink to England, every guest;  
 That man's the best Cosmopolite  
 Who loves his native country best.  
 May freedom's oak for ever live  
 With stronger life from day to day;  
 That man's the true Conservative  
 Who lops the moulder'd branch away.  
 Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound! 10  
 To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,  
 And the great name of England, round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
 To keep our English Empire whole!  
 To all our noble sons, the strong  
 New England of the Southern Pole!  
 To England under Indian skies,  
 To those dark millions of her realm!  
 To Canada whom we love and prize.  
 Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round.

God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great name of England drink, my friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round and round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire!  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire!  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state; 30  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great!  
Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round.

## POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,  
Old Virgil who would write ten lines, they say,  
At dawn, and lavish all the golden day  
To make them wealthier in his readers' eyes;  
And you, old popular Horace, you the wise  
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,  
And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter bay,  
Catullus, whose dead songster never dies;  
If, glancing downward on the kindly sphere 9  
That once had roll'd you round and round the sun,  
You see your Art still shrined in human shelves,  
You should be jubilant that you flourish'd here  
Before the Love of Letters, overdone,  
Had swamp'd the sacred poets with themselves.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER



### LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced  
these sandy tracts,  
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the  
curlews call,  
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley  
Hall.

So — your happy suit was blasted — she the faultless,  
the divine;  
And you liken — boyish babble — this boy-love of  
yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;  
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in  
babble at last.

“Curse him!” curse your fellow-victim? call him do-  
tard in your rage?  
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a do-  
tard's age.

10

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was  
not wise;  
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those  
sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting — Amy's arms about  
my neck —

Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of  
wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck  
had flown;

I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck  
alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for  
her sake?

You, not you! your modern amorist is of easier, earth-  
lier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid  
child;

But your Judith — but your worldling — *she* had  
never driven me wild. 20

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the  
golden ring,

She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of  
spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of  
life,

While she vows "till death shall part us," she the  
would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings — father, mother  
— be content,

Even the homely farm can teach us there is something  
in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the  
ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the  
hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem  
in his pride;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in  
which he died. 30

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have  
stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our  
blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt  
in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of  
Locksley — there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she  
smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead the mother,  
dead the child.

Dead — and sixty years ago, and dead her aged hus-  
band now —  
I, this old white-headed dreamer, stoopt and kiss'd her  
marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, pas-  
sionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the plan-  
et's dawning years. 40

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fallen  
away.

Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying  
day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the  
chancel stones,

All his virtues — I forgive them — black in white  
above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight  
against the foe,

Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth  
will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden  
sequence ran,

She with all the charm of woman, she with all the  
breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-  
sweet,

Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender  
feet, 50

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and  
mind,

She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me  
to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down  
the coast,

Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter  
ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at  
 sea;  
 Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to  
 me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left  
 alone,  
 Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside  
 her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipt, being true as he  
 was brave;  
 Good, for good is good, he follow'd, yet he look'd  
 beyond the grave, 60

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as  
 lord of all,  
 Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the  
 pall! ~

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but  
 kept the deck,  
 Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the  
 sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no — for since our dying race  
 began,  
 Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of  
 man

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and  
 slew the wife  
 Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second  
 life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds  
beyond the night;  
Even the black Australian dying hopes he shall  
return, a white. 70

Truth for truth, and good for good! The good, the  
true, the pure, the just —  
Take the charm "For ever" from them, and they  
crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost within a  
growing gloom;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a  
tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time  
and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest  
commonplace!

"Forward" rang the voices then, and of the many  
mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten thousand  
years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings  
would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle — iron-hearted  
victors they. 80

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Mo-  
guls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand  
human skulls;

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest  
 English names,  
 Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd  
 Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest  
 of the great;  
 Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of  
 heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd him-  
 self a curse:  
 Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller?  
 which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gos-  
 pel, all men's good;  
 Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the  
 light with blood. 90

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day  
 begun —  
 Crown'd with sunlight — over darkness — from the  
 still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the  
 primal clan?  
 "Kill your enemy, for you hate him," still, "your  
 enemy" was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless  
 horse, and drive  
 Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier  
 brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers — burnt at  
midnight, found at morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring,  
born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we  
men?

Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would that he were here  
again, 100

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the  
very flowers

Sisters, brothers — and the beasts — whose pains are  
hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all  
will end?

Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wis-  
dom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of  
the Past,

Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that  
the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be  
wise —

When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness?  
written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact  
to scorn,

Cries to weakest as to strongest, "Ye are equals,  
equal born." 110

Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be level with the  
flat.

Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger than the  
cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of overheated language  
loom

Larger than the lion, — Demos end in working its own  
doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her?  
shall we yield?

Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices  
from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial  
sceptre now,

Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suf-  
frage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you  
and you,

Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were  
wholly true. 120

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found, and more than  
once, and still could find,

Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of  
mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised  
hustings-liar;

So the higher wields the lower, while the lower is the  
higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right  
divine;

Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his  
swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sick-  
ening game;

Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they  
shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe,  
known to all;

Step by step we rose to greatness, — thro' the  
tonguesters we may fall. 130

You that woo the Voices — tell them "old experience  
is a fool,"

Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot  
read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones  
in their place;

Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her  
face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the  
yelling street,

Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in  
the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without  
the hope,

Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their  
ruins down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymes-  
ter, play your part,

Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues  
of art. 140

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul pas-  
sions bare;

Down with Reticence, down with Reverence — for-  
ward — naked — let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of  
your sewer;

Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should  
issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of  
Zolaism, —

Forward, forward, ay, and backward, downward too  
into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising  
race of men;

Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the  
beast again?

Only "dust to dust" for me that sicken at your law-  
less din,

Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer  
world begin. 150

Heated am I? you — you wonder — well, it scarce  
becomes mine age —

Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the  
stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall  
asleep?

Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a  
deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts,  
for I am gray;

After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless  
May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jac-  
querie,

Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not  
see?

When the schemes and all the systems, kingdoms and  
republics fall,

Something kindlier, higher, holier — all for each and  
each for all? 160

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice,  
Love, and Truth;

All the millions one at length with all the visions of my  
youth?

All disease quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf,  
or blind;

Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger  
mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single  
tongue —

I have seen her far away — for is not Earth as yet so  
young? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion  
kill'd,

Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert  
till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she  
smiles,

Universal ocean softly washing all her warless  
isles. 170

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thou-  
sands millions, then —

All her harvest all too narrow — who can fancy war-  
less men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late  
or soon?

Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead  
world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. — On this day and  
at this hour,

In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the  
Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years  
ago —

She and I — the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy  
glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see  
her now —

Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seem-  
ing-deathless vow. — 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the  
dune, the grass!

Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself  
will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier  
earth of ours,

Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of never fading  
flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all  
good things —

All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples,  
perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to that splendor or  
in Mars,

We should see the globe we groan in, fairest of their  
evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and mad-  
ness, lust and spite,

Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful  
light? 190

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so  
silver-fair,

Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, "Would to  
God that we were there"?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the im-  
measurable sea,

Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known  
to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols of innumerable  
 man,  
 Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the  
 plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled  
 sphere?  
 Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword "Evolu-  
 tion" here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
 And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the  
 mud. 200

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king  
 of sacred song;  
 Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother in-  
 sect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns along their fiery  
 way,  
 All their planets whirling round them, flash a million  
 miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before her highest, man,  
 was born,  
 Many an æon too may pass when earth is manless and  
 forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded — pools of salt,  
 and plots of land —  
 Shallow skin of green and azure — chains of moun-  
 tain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us meant us to be mightier by  
and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the  
human eye, 210

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the  
human soul;  
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in  
the Whole.

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-  
guarded gate.  
Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-morrow — you,  
you come so late.

Wreck'd — your train — or all but wreck'd? a shat-  
ter'd wheel? a vicious boy!  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to  
wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in  
the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city  
slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on  
palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand  
on the street. 220

There the master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her  
daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the  
dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the  
rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the  
poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your "Forward," yours are  
hope and youth, but I —  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with  
the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into  
the night;  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the  
light.

Light the fading gleam of even? light the glimmer of  
the dawn?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam  
withdrawn. 230

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth  
will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you  
and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her  
earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at  
rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of  
Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward  
streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.

Leave the master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest,  
rustic Squire,

Kindly landlord, boon companion — youthful jealousy  
is a liar. 240

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness  
from your brain.

Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not  
lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the  
lower school,

Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a  
fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village — Art and Grace are  
less and less:

Science grows and Beauty dwindles — roofs of slated  
hideousness!

There is one old hostel left us where they swing the  
Locksley shield,

Till the peasant cow shall butt the “lion passant”  
from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry,  
passing hence,

In the common deluge drowning old political common-  
sense! 250

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have  
fled!

All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the  
dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disap-  
pears,

Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty  
years.

. . . . .

In this hostel — I remember — I repent it o'er his  
grave —

Like a clown — by chance he met me — I refused the  
hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the  
mouldering bricks —

I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of  
six —

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving  
showers —

Peep't the winsome face of Edith like a flower among  
the flowers.

260

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the  
chapel bell!

Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, "I have loved  
thee well"?

Then a peal that shakes the portal — one has come to  
claim his bride,

Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and  
started from my side —

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse  
     your day,  
 Move among your people, know them, follow him who  
     led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier  
     brother men,  
 Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the  
     school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd him? who shall  
     swear it cannot be?  
 Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty  
     such as he. 270

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God must mingle  
     with the game.  
 Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see  
     nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the  
     Powers of Ill,  
 Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of  
     the will.

Follow you the star that lights a desert pathway, yours  
     or mine.  
 Forward, till you see the Highest Human Nature is di-  
     vine.

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man can half-  
     control his doom —  
 Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant  
     tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with  
the past.

I that loathed have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear  
the pall;

Then I leave thee lord and master, latest lord of Locksley Hall.

## DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS

• •

### VASTNESS

#### I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a  
vanish'd face,  
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the dust  
of a vanish'd race.

#### II

Raving politics, never at rest — as this poor earth's  
pale history runs, —  
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a  
million million of suns?

#### III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless vio-  
lence mourn'd by the wise,  
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular tor-  
rent of lies upon lies;

#### IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious annals of  
army and fleet,  
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause,  
trumpets of victory, groans of defeat;

## V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity  
setting the martyr aflame;  
Thralldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and  
recks not to ruin a realm in her name.

## VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of  
doubts that darken the schools;  
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd up  
by her vassal legion of fools;

## VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and her  
vintage, her silk and her corn;  
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famishing populace,  
wharves forlorn;

## VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; gloom of the  
evening, Life at a close;  
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway with her  
flying robe and her poison'd rose;

## IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleasure, a  
worm which writhes all day, and at night  
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings  
him back to the curse of the light;

## X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest  
Poverty, bare to the bone;  
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the  
rift in a throne;

## XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant  
challenge to Time and to Fate;  
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the  
laurell'd graves of the great;

## XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no re-  
grets for aught that has been,  
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless com-  
petence, golden mean;

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy  
spites of the village spire;  
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and vows  
that are snapt in a moment of fire;

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died  
in the doing it, flesh without mind;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self died  
out in the love of his kind;

## XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all  
these old revolutions of earth;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire — change of the  
tide — what is all of it worth?

## XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying  
voices of prayer,  
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy  
with all that is fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own  
corpse-coffins at last?  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the  
depths of a meaningless Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a mo-  
ment's anger of bees in their hive? —  
. . . . .

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him for ever:  
the dead are not dead but alive.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

## I

O YOUNG Mariner,  
You from the haven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician  
With eyes of wonder,  
*I* am Merlin,  
And *I* am dying,  
*I* am Merlin  
Who follow the Gleam.

## II

Mighty the Wizard  
Who found me at sunrise  
Sleeping, and woke me  
And learn'd me Magic!  
Great the Master,

And sweet the Magic,  
When over the valley,  
In early summers,  
Over the mountain,  
On human faces,  
And all around me,  
Moving to melody,  
Floated the Gleam.

## III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it  
A barbarous people,  
Blind to the magic  
And deaf to the melody,  
Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
A demon vext me,  
The light retreated,  
The landskip darken'd,  
The melody deaden'd,  
The Master whisper'd,  
"Follow the Gleam."

## IV

Then to the melody,  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland,  
Gnome of the cavern,  
Griffin and Giant,  
And dancing of Fairies  
In desolate hollows,  
And wraiths of the mountain,  
And rolling of dragons  
By warble of water,

Or cataract music  
Of falling torrents,  
Flitted the Gleam.

## V

Down from the mountain  
And over the level,  
And streaming and shining on  
Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ruddy faces  
Of lowly labor,  
Slided the Gleam —

## VI

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the King;  
Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested the Gleam.

## VII

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot;  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die;  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening  
Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a melody  
Yearningly tender,  
Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with the Gleam.

## VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city,

That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom;  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came —  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers the Gleam.

## IX

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow the Gleam.

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,  
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"

And the Lord — “Not yet; but make it as clean as  
you can,  
And then I will let you a better.”

## I

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain or a  
fable,  
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of  
morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my  
stable,  
Youth and health, and birth and wealth, and choice  
of women and of wines?

## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save break-  
ing my bones on the rack?  
Would I had past in the morning that looks so  
bright from afar!

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was linkt  
with thee eighty years back.  
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs  
on a star.

## I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer  
than their own,  
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal  
voice be mute?  
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the  
throne,  
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy prov-  
ince of the brute.

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field  
in the Past,

Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs  
of a low desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at  
last,

As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse  
of a height that is higher.

## FAR — FAR — AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew  
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,  
Far — far — away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?  
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells  
Far — far — away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,  
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,  
Far — far — away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath  
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death  
Far — far — away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of birth,  
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,  
Far — far — away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?  
O dying words, can Music make you live  
Far — far — away?

### POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain;  
For some cry "Quick" and some cry "Slow,"  
But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill "Too-slow" will need the whip,  
Down hill "Too-quick" the chain.

### BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of European  
confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek for the rights of an  
equal humanity,  
How often your Re-volution has proven but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of a civic insan-  
ity!

### THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show  
In some fifth act what this wild Drama means.

## DOUBT AND PRAYER

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy rod,  
Rail at "Blind Fate" with many a vain "Alas!"  
From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass  
By that same path our true forefathers trod;  
And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod  
Draw from my death Thy living flower and grass,  
Before I learn that Love, which is, and was  
My Father, and my Brother, and my God!  
Still me with patience! soften me with grief!  
Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,  
Till this embattled wall of unbelief  
My prison, not my fortress, fall away!  
Then, if thou willest, let my day be brief,  
So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the day.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF  
CLARENCE AND AVONDALE

## TO THE MOURNERS

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,  
That shadow of a crown, that o'er him hung,  
Has vanished in the shadow cast by Death.  
So princely, tender, truthful, reverent, pure —  
Mourn! That a world-wide Empire mourns with you,  
That all the Thrones are clouded by your loss,  
Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;  
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,  
Then, after his brief range of blameless days,  
The toll of funeral in an Angel car  
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.

The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,  
His shadow darkens earth; his truer name

Is "Onward," no discordance in the roll  
And march of that Eternal Harmony  
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard  
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!

### CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless  
deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

## NOTES

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TENNYSON wrote as a preface to the notes which he was requested to prepare to his poems:

"I am told that my young countrymen would like notes to my poems. Shall I write what dictionaries tell to save some of the idle folk trouble? or am I to try to fix a moral to each poem? or to add an analysis of passages? or to give a history of my similes? I do not like the task."

His son and editor, Hallam Tennyson, adds: "He wished it to be clearly understood that, in his opinion, to use his own words, 'Poetry is like shot-silk with many glancing colors,' and that, 'every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the past.'"

- 23 **Dedication — To the Queen.** First published in 1851. On November 19, 1850, Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate to succeed Wordsworth, the poet, he says, "that uttered nothing base."

### JUVENILIA, OR THE POEMS OF 1830

As might be expected, there are many poems in this volume which show Tennyson still in the imitative stage, writing in the style of the generation before. The poems, for the most part, are youthful in idea, and characterized rather by prettiness and gracefulness than by that conscious artistry which Tennyson was later to attain. A few of them — particularly *Mariana*, *The Poet*, and *The Sea-Fairies* — begin to show, both in their metre and in their word-painting, the characteristics of the later poet. Tennyson said of the various portraits of women in this volume: "All these ladies were evolved, like the camel, from my own consciousness." *Isabel*, however, is really a portrait of Tennyson's mother, "a remarkable, saintly woman," he called her. Edward Fitzgerald said that she was "one of the most innocent and tender-hearted ladies I ever saw."

- 30 **Mariana.** See Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, III, 1, 220 ff., and IV, 1. This poem, with the later *Mariana in the South*, Tennyson intended, he said, as the expression of a desolate loneliness. In both poems he stresses the peculiar relation between the central character and the environment, which is entirely different in the two poems. *Mari-*

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ana is Tennyson's first important experiment in the sort of landscape painting which he was later to use so much. Churton Collins calls attention to the similarity in mood between this and the fragment of Sappho which Tennyson loved: "The moon has set, and the Pleiades, and it is midnight: the hour too is going by, but I sleep alone." Tennyson insisted that, contrary to the opinion of his critics, he did not have in mind any particular "moated grange"; the picture, he says, rose in his mind to the music of Shakespeare's words: "There at the moated grange resides this dejected Mariana."

- 39 **The Poet.** Milton, Wordsworth, Keats and Tennyson stand together in English literature as the four poets who have most completely felt poetry as their "vocation." What Tennyson says here may be compared with Wordsworth, *Prelude*, iv, 334-36:

"I made no vows, but vows  
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me  
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,  
A dedicated spirit."

Compare also, Milton, *Reason of Church Government*: "I began thus far to assent to . . . an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertime, as they should not willingly let it die."

*Ibid.*: "Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine . . . nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her seven daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch — purify the lips of whom he pleases."

Keats, *Letters*: "As to what you say about my being a Poet, I can return no answer but by saying that the high idea I have of poetical form makes me think I see it towering high above me. . . . I have been in such a state of mind as to read over my lines and hate them. I am one that 'gathers samphire, dreadful trade' — the Cliff of Poesy towers above me."

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Compare also Shelley, *The Skylark*:

"Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

- 42 **The Sea-Fairies.** The forerunner of *The Lotos-Eaters* both in subject-matter and in the suggestion of Tennyson's increasing mastery over metre.

### THE LADY OF SHALOTT AND OTHER POEMS

The poems published in 1833 mark a great advance over the earlier ones, particularly in their drawing of character, and in their nature pictures. Tennyson's interest in character, like Browning's, is a natural result of the new interest in the nineteenth century in the individual. It is interesting to watch, in the work of Tennyson, the way in which — in his own words — "the individual withers and the world is more and more." His most successful characters are those which he drew from the world about him, and those which, originally classic, he interpreted in terms of his own generation; even these are rather types than individuals. In his descriptions of Nature, also, he was most successful with those scenes which he knew best.

- 50 **The Lady of Shalott.** Tennyson says that the idea for this poem was taken from an Italian novelette, *Donna di Scalotta*, Shalott and Astolat being the same word. The story is the first form of the tale afterwards told as *Lancelot and Elaine* in the *Idylls of the King*, although Tennyson says that he did not know the latter tale when he wrote *The Lady of Shalott*. In the Italian story, Camelot is on the sea. There has been a great deal of discussion on the part of critics as to the "inner meaning" of the poem. Tennyson said to Canon Angier: "It may be a parable of the poetic nature, clashing with the world." Hallam Tennyson says: "The key to this tale of magic symbolism is to be found in the lines:

"Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott."

Tennyson added: "The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from whom she has been so long secluded takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities."

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55 **Ænone.** The story of Ænone, barely mentioned by greater classical writers, is told at some length by Quintus Calaber. Tennyson's use of it is the first striking example of the way in which, in his hands, classical subjects take on a new significance. His attitude toward his Greek originals may best be seen by comparing his classical poems with those of Keats. Keats cared only for the beauty of the legends; he was not in any way a moralist, nor was he interested in applying ancient material to modern conditions. While Tennyson is far from didactic, there is in him something of the "interpretation" found in the attitude of mediæval allegory to such tales as the Judgment of Paris. The change which came about in Tennyson may best be seen by comparing the point of view of Ænone with that in the late *Death of Ænone* in which Tennyson's English conventionality is exhibited at its extreme. The point of view even in Tennyson's early poems is distinctly English; the talk of *power, law, right, and wisdom* in the speeches of Hera and Athena is much more English than Greek; and the words of Athena: "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," express not Athena so much as Tennyson himself. The poet is thinking far more of *his* England than of Athena and Paris.

The scenery of the poem Hallam Tennyson explains thus: "My father visited the Pyrenees with Arthur Hallam in 1830. From this time forward, the lonely Pyrenean peaks, the mountains with 'their streaks of meadow ledges midway down,' and the 'long brook falling thru' the clov'n ravine' were a continual source of inspiration. He wrote part of *Ænone* in the valley of Cauteretz."

64 **The Palace of Art.** This poem grew out of a chance remark made by Trench when he and Tennyson were at Trinity College: "Tennyson, we cannot live in art." The succeeding versions of the poem afford the best possible opportunity to trace the development of Tennyson as *an artist*. Tennyson objected to the publishing of early versions of a poet's work when the poet himself had made later versions; Stopford Brooke, however, says: "To compare the first draft of the poem with the second is not only to receive a useful lesson in the art of poetry — it is also to understand, far better than by any analysis of his life, a great part of Tennyson's character; his impatience for perfection, his steadiness in pursuit of it, his power of taking pains, the long intellectual consideration he gave to matters which originated in the emotions, his love of balancing this and

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that form of his thought against one another, and when the balancing was done, the unchangeableness of his acceptance of one form and of his rejection of another; and finally, correlative with these qualities, his want of impulse and rush in song as in life — English, not Celtic at all."

"*The Palace of Art*," said Tennyson, "is the embodiment of my own belief that the Godlike life is with man, and for man; that

"Beauty, Good and Knowledge are three sisters. . . .  
That never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts out Love, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie,  
Howling in outer darkness."

He had intended to introduce into the poem both painting and sculpture, but finished only two sculptures. One was "the Tishbite whom the ravens fed," the other "Olympias." It is noticeable that much of the architecture of the poem is that of Cambridge — the "squared lawns," the cloisters, the towers, the fountains, the windows.

- 64 15. Hallam Tennyson says: "The shadow of Saturn thrown on the luminous ring, though the planet revolves in ten and one-half hours, appears to be motionless."

- 68 103. Islamite. Mahomet.

105. Mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son. Arthur.

111. Ausonian king. Numa Pompilius, the traditional second king of Rome, who was reputed to have been instructed in affairs of state and religion by the nymph Egeria.

115. Indian Cama. Kamadeva, the Hindu god of love, son of Brahma; equivalent of Eros.

117. Europa. Sister to Cadmus, carried to Delphi by Zeus in the form of a bull. Compare the description given by Moschus, *Idyll II*: "Meanwhile Europa, riding on the back of the divine bull, with one hand clasped the beast's great horn, and with the other caught up the purple fold of her garment, lest it might trail and be wet in the hoar sea's infinite spray. And her deep robe was swelled out by the winds, like the sail of a ship, and lightly still did waft the maiden onward." (Tr. Andrew Lang.)

- 69 137. Ionian father. Homer.

- 70 163. Large-brow'd Verulam. Tennyson had in mind the particular bust of Bacon which he saw in the Trinity College Library.

164. first of those who know. Dante (*Inferno*, III) calls Aristotle "il maestro di color che sanno."

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70 171. The statue of Memnon near Thebes was traditionally supposed to give forth music when the rays of the rising sun struck it.

72 227. Cf. *Daniel*, v, 25.

73 255. Tennyson says: "Some old writer calls the Heavens 'the Circumstance.' When an undergraduate, a friend said to me, 'How fine the word "circumstance" is, used in that sense.' Here it is more or less a play on the word. The Ptolemaic astronomy describes the universe as scooped out of Chaos."

75 **The Lotos-Eaters.** The subject is taken from the *Odyssey*, ix, 82 ff. A study of the poem, in comparison with the original, will show clearly one of Tennyson's greatest powers — that of creating scenery and mood where none before existed. The Lotos-Eaters in Homer are simply 'men who make food of flowers,' and the land itself is merely named, not described. As in *Ænone* and *Ulysses*, Tennyson reinterprets his classical material in terms of his own conceptions and of the problems of nineteenth century England. The mood of the poem and the descriptions may well be compared with Spenser's Cave of Sleep and the Idle Lake, and Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*. The first part of the poem shows the Spenserian influence in the stanza form also. The general theme of the poem — which it shares with the *Sea Fairies* and to some extent with the *Palace of Art*, is in strong contrast to that of *Ulysses*.

3. Tennyson first used the word "strand" at the end of this line, but decided, he says, that "the no rhyme of 'land' and 'land' was lazier."

11. **slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.** This line was composed long before Tennyson thought of the poem as a whole, when he was in the Pyrenees. He said that it expressed exactly the impression which he received watching a mountain waterfall, and he was somewhat amused, and a good deal provoked, when, after this poem was published, a critic suggested that it would be better if Mr. Tennyson would go for his similes to nature rather than to the theater.

76 42. **wandering fields.** The figure, says Tennyson, was "made by me on a voyage from Bordeaux to Dublin (1830). I saw a great creamy slope of sea on the horizon, rolling toward us. I often chronicle on the spot, in four or five words or more, whatever strikes me as picturesque in nature."

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76 Choric Song.

79 69. This part of the poem was not in the first edition, but was added in the edition of 1842.

88. moly. Cf. *Odyssey*, x, 280 ff. "Black at the root it is, like milk its blossoms, and the gods call it moly. Hard is it for mortal man to dig; with gods all things may be." (Tr. Palmer.) Cf. *Comus*, 636:

"... that moly  
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave."

80 110. On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind. Cf. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, v, 83, and vi, 58:

"Nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere ævum."

Also *Æneid*, iv, 379-80:

"Scilicet in superis labor est, ea cura quietos  
Sollicitat."

111 ff. These lines also were new in the edition of 1842, a vast improvement over the original forty lines which simply described the "golden vale." The gods as they are here described are not the gods of Homer, but those of Lucretius, whose chief characteristics were indolence and selfishness.

81 120 ff. The first evidence of the strong sympathy Tennyson shows throughout the rest of his poetry with "an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil."

A Dream of Fair Women. This poem was altered more than any other of Tennyson's. First printed in 1833, it was republished in 1842, 1845, 1853, 1884, each time with alterations. With Chaucer's *Legend of Fair Women* on which it purports to be based, it has little in common. Both are visions and both deal with illustrious unhappy women; Cleopatra, as Tennyson himself pointed out, is the only figure they have in common. The beginning with a dream is one of the commonest devices of all mediæval allegory.

3. morning star. "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job, xxxviii, 7.

5. Dan. Latin, *dominus*. Cf. *Faerie Queen*, "Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled."

82 27. tortoise. Latin, *testudo*.

83 61 ff. "How magnificently old Turner would have painted it," says Tennyson.

84 87. Helen was the daughter of Zeus and Leda.

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84 98. Cf. Marlowe, *Faustus*:

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?"

100. Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, sacrificed by her father to Artemis at Aulis.

85 107 ff. Hallam Tennyson suggests that his father had in mind the picture by Timanthes, *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, of which there is a Pompeiian wall painting.

118 ff. Cf. *Iliad*, vi, 345: "But Helen spoke to him with gentle words: ' . . . Would that on the day when my mother bore me at the first an evil storm-wind had caught me away to a mountain or a billow of the loud-sounding sea where the billow might have swept me away before all things came to pass.' "

127. Tennyson says: "I was thinking of Shakespeare's Cleopatra:

. . . 'Think of me  
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black.'  
(*Ant. and Cleo.* 1, 5, 28.)

"Millais had made a mulatto of her on his illustration. I know perfectly well that she was a Greek. 'Swarthy' merely means *sunburnt*. I should not have spoken of her breast as 'polished silver' if I had not known her to be a white woman. Read 'sunburnt' if you like it better."

87 181 ff. Cf. *Judges*, vi, 26-40.

89 238. Cf. *Judges*, vi, 33.

90 251. Rosamond, the daughter of Walter Clifford, and mistress of Henry II — "*Rosa mundi non rosa munda.*"

259. Fulvia. Really the wife of Antony; the name is applied, by analogy, to Eleanor, wife of Henry II.

266. Tennyson notes: "Margaret Roper, daughter of Sir Thomas More, who is said to have transferred his headless corpse from the tower to Chelsea Church. Sir Thomas More's head had remained for fourteen days on London Bridge after his execution, and was about to be thrown into the Thames to make room for others, when she claimed and bought it. For this she was cast into prison. She died nine years after her father, and was buried at St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, but in the year 1715 the vault was opened, and it is stated that she was found in her coffin clasping the small leaden box which enclosed her father's head."

269. Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I, who went with him to the Holy Land (1269) where he was stabbed with a poisoned dagger. She sucked the poison from the wound.

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- 91 **You Ask Me Why, Tho' Ill at Ease.** Tennyson notes: "This and the two following poems, 'Of Old sat Freedom' and 'Love thou thy land' are said to have been versified from a speech by my friend Spedding at the Cambridge Union. I am reported as having gone home and written these three poems during the night, and shown them to him in the morning. The speech is purely mythical; at least I never heard it, and no poem of mine was ever founded on it. . . . Aubrey de Vere showed these poems to Wordsworth; they were the first poems of mine which he read."
- 97 **England and America in 1782.** First published in a New York paper in 1874.

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS

- 99 **Morte d'Arthur.** This poem, composed probably in 1834, is the beginning of the *Idylls of the King*, although it was forty years before Tennyson completed the twelve books which he had planned. The prologue "At Farmer Allen's on the Christmas Eve" was written after the *Morte d'Arthur* had been composed, to excuse "the faint Homeric echoes" and to make it appear that this was one of a series of poems, the rest of which had been lost.

"How much history we have in the story of Arthur," Tennyson said, "is doubtful. Let not my readers press too hardly on details whether for history or for allegory. Some think that King Arthur may be taken to typify conscience. He is anyhow meant to be a man who spent himself in the cause of honour, duty, and self-sacrifice, who felt and aspired with his nobler knights, though with a stronger and clearer conscience than any of them, and 'reverencing his conscience as his king.' 'There was no such perfect man since Adam,' as an old writer said." At another time Tennyson wrote: "The whole of my *Idylls* is the dream of a man coming into practical life and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the table-land of life, and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation, but of a whole cycle of generations."

There is a noticeable difference between the treatment of the early and the later idylls, the latter becoming far more allegorical.

4. The Lyonness of legend lay between Cornwall and the Scilly Islands.

- 100 78 ff. Compare this with the account in Malory: "There-

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fore," said Arthur, "take thou my good sword Excalibur, and go with it to yonder waterside. And when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword on that water and come again and tell me what thou seest." "My lord," said Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done, and lightly will I bring thee word again." So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the hilt were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, "If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come to good, but harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree.

101 **III. This way and that dividing the swift mind.** Translation of Virgil, *Aeneid*, iv, 285: "Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc."

105 **249. Three queens.** In the original *Morte d'Arthur*, one was Queen Morgan le Fay, Arthur's sister; one the Queen of Northgalis; the third, the Queen of the Waste Lands.

106 **291. The old order changeth.** There is more than a suggestion here of the times of Tennyson — the period of the Oxford Movement, the Chartist Movement, the Parliamentary Reform, the Corn Laws.

107 **306. Bound by gold chains.** The idea may be compared with *Iliad*, viii, 19: "Fasten ye a rope of gold from heaven and all ye gods lay hold thereof and all ye goddesses; yet could ye not drag from heaven to earth Zeus, counsellor supreme" — and with Milton's picture of the world hanging by a golden chain from heaven, *Paradise Lost*, ii, 1051 ff.

**311. Where falls not hail or rain or any snow.** Compare the description of the Elysian fields, *Odyssey*, iv, 566 ff.: "No snow is here, no winter long, no rain, but the loud blowing breezes of the west the Ocean-stream sends up to bring men coolness." (Tr. Palmer.) Cf. also Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, iii, 18 ff.:

"... sedesque quietae  
Quas neque concutiunt venti, nec nubila nimbi  
Aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina  
Cana cadens violat semperque innubilus aether  
Integit, et large diffuso lumine redent."

**314.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x, 195: "An island which the boundless deep encircles like a crown."

The title *English Idylls and Other Poems* explains what Tennyson was attempting to do. As Theocritus had in his *Idylls* made "little pictures" of Sicily and the Sicilians, so Tennyson intended to paint simple English life.

108 **Dora.** Of this poem Wordsworth said: "Mr. Tennyson,

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I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your *Dora* and have not succeeded."

The idea of the poem was suggested to Tennyson by Miss Mitford's *Dora Creswell*, though Tennyson has made *Dora* a woman instead of a girl, as in the original. The landscape, as Tennyson pointed out, is the same in both the tale and the poem, though the one is in sunshine, the other in shadow.

114 **St. Simeon Stylites.** Tennyson drew his information about St. Simeon principally from Hone's *Every-Day Book*, i, 35-36, in which the legends of the two saints Simeon have been amalgamated.

119 **r69. Abaddon.** See *Revelation*, ix, 11. Asmodeus appears in Hebrew demonology as a destructive demon. He is 'le diable boiteux' of Le Sage's romance, and is also a character of Foote's *Devil on Two Sticks* and Byron's *Vision of Judgment*.

120 **Ulysses.** In the *Odyssey* (xi, 100 ff.) the ghost of Tiresias foretells the future to Odysseus. He is to return home and slay the suitors, then start out bearing an oar on his shoulder, until he comes to the land of "the men who know no sea, and do not eat food mixed with salt." After having offered sacrifice to Poseidon, he is to return homeward. "Upon yourself death from the sea shall very gently come and cut you off, bowed down with hale old age. Round you shall be a prosperous people. I speak what shall not fail."

This is certainly not the conception of Tennyson. Far nearer in spirit is the Ulysses whom Dante shows in the eighth circle of Hell, the "bolgia" of the evil counsellors. He says (*Inferno*, xxvi, 90 ff.):

"Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence  
Of my old father, nor return of love  
That should have crown'd Penelope with joy,  
Could overcome in me the zeal I had  
To explore the world and search the ways of life,  
Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sail'd  
Into the deep illimitable main,  
With but one bark, and the small faithful band  
That yet cleav'd to me. . . .

. . . Tardy with age  
Were I and my companions, when we came  
To the strait pass, where Hercules ordain'd  
The boundaries not to be o'erstepped by man.

'O brothers!' I began, 'who to the west  
Through perils without number now have reach'd;  
To this, the short remaining watch that yet

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Our senses have to wake, refuse not proof  
 Of the unpeopled world, following the track  
 Of Phoebus. Call to mind from whence ye sprang;  
 Ye were not formed to live the life of brutes,  
 But virtue to pursue and knowledge high." [Tr. Cary.]

While more like the Ulysses of Dante than that of Homer, Tennyson's is not entirely either; there is much of the many-sided individual of the Renaissance in his conception — it has in fact been likened to Leonardo da Vinci. But there is more of the nineteenth century attitude, the restlessness which the "new order" was bringing into England, an interpretation of the old in terms of the new.

"The poem was written," Tennyson says, "soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and it gives the feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." This was the poem which Carlyle preferred of all Tennyson wrote. "These lines do not make me weep," he said, "but there is in me what would fill whole Lachrymatories as I read."

121 18. I am a part of all that I have met. Cf. "quorum pars magna fui," *Æneid*, II, 6.

19. Contrast with *The Lotos-Eaters*, 45 ff.

122 50. Contrast with *The Lotos-Eaters*, 83 ff.

58-59. A line frequently found in the *Odyssey*.

**Tithonus.** This poem, which was written about the same time as *Ulysses*, was not published for nearly a quarter of a century, when Tennyson, in response to the request of Thackeray and his publishers for something new, "ferreted among old books and found it." It was afterwards translated into Greek hexameters by Professor Jebb.

125 **Locksley Hall.** This dramatic monologue is in many ways a forerunner of *Maud*. It was suggested to Tennyson by Sir William Jones' translation of the old Arabian *Motallakat*, one of the tales of which is of a man who passes the place where the tent of his mistress formerly stood, and who sends his companions away while he meditates and mourns. "*Locksley Hall* is an imaginative place," says Tennyson, "although the coast is Lincolnshire and the hero is imaginary. The whole poem represents young life, its good side, its deficiencies, and its yearnings."

It is written in trochaics because Arthur Hallam once told Tennyson that the English people are naturally fond of trochaics. The very unusual measure which Tennyson uses here has never been explained. Various critics have

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suggested that he took the idea of the double tetrameter line from the dialogues in the plays of Aristophanes, where such measure is common; yet it is hardly credible that so good a Greek scholar as Tennyson would have purposely used a comic metre for a poem which he intended to be tragic in tone. It seems probable that he was influenced, consciously or not, by the dialogue measure in the plays of Æschylus, particularly the *Persæ* and the ending of the *Agamemnon*. Here Æschylus uses the trochaic double tetrameter line to express passionate outbursts; it was indeed the metre of the older plays. Aristotle in his *Poetics* (chapter IV) calls attention to the fact that the early metre of drama was trochaic tetrameter, but that later the iambic trimeter came to be substituted for it. The metre of these passages of Æschylus may well have been in Tennyson's mind, and have occurred to him when he turned to trochaics.

Tennyson said of his monodramatic poems in general, in answer to those critics who insisted upon finding him in all his heroes: "In a certain way, no doubt, poets and novelists, however dramatic they are, give themselves in their works. The mistake that people make is that they think the poet's poems are a kind of 'catalogue raisonné' of his very own self, and of all the facts in his life, not seeing that they often only express a poetic instinct, or judgment, on character real or imagined, and on the facts of lives real or imagined."

- 130 76. That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things. Tennyson's translation of Dante (*Inferno*, v, 121):

"... Nessun maggior dolore  
Che ricordasi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria."

- 135 142. The individual withers and the world is more and more. Frequently quoted as significant of the change coming over Tennyson and over England in general during this period.

- 137 182. Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change. Tennyson wrote: "When I went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester (1830) I thought that the wheels ran in a groove. It was a black night, and there was such a vast crowd around the train at the station that we could not see the wheels. Then I made the line."

- 138 *Godiva*. A full account of the legend as Tennyson used it may be found in Reader, *History and Description of Coventry Fair Show with the History of Leofric and Godiv*.

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- 140 **Saint Agnes' Eve.** The title, originally simply *Saint Agnes*, was changed to *Saint Agnes' Eve* evidently to show more closely its relation to the Keats poem by which it was influenced. Tennyson intended it as a companion to *Sir Galahad*.
- 142 **Sir Galahad.** This poem marks another phase of Tennyson's interest in the stories which he finally combined into the *Idylls of the King*. It is, in a way, a prelude to the *Holy Grail*. In the early *Morte d'Arthur* St. Joseph of Arimathea is represented as saying to Galahad: "Thou hast resembled me in two things in that thou hast seen the marvels of the Sangreal, and in that thou hast been a clean maiden as I have been and am."
- 144 **The Beggar Maid.** Evidently founded on the old ballad in Percy's *Reliques* of King Cophetua and the beggar maid. It is referred to by Shakespeare in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Richard II*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.
- 146 **To —, After Reading a Life and Letters.** It is not certain to whom the poem was addressed. The occasion was the publication of the love letters of Keats.
- 147 **Break, Break, Break.** This poem, which has been called by many critics Tennyson's most perfect short lyric, expresses in four stanzas the same feeling which Tennyson expanded in *In Memoriam*; it too was written of the death of Arthur Hallam.

## SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS"

- 149 **The Princess** was published in 1847. Dawson, who edited it, and to whom Tennyson wrote much about it, said: "At the time of the publication of *The Princess* the surface-thought of England was intent solely upon Irish famines, corn-laws and free trade. It was only after many years that it became conscious of anything wrong in the position of women. . . . No doubt such ideas were at the time 'in the air' in England, but the dominant practical Philistinism scoffed at them as *ideas* banished to America, that refuge for exploded European absurdities. I believe the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstonecraft (1792), first turned the attention of the people of England to the 'wrongs of women.'

"As for the various characters in the poem, they give the different views of Woman's higher education; and as for the heroine herself, the Princess Ida, the poet who created her considered her as one of the noblest among his women."

Tennyson said of the *Songs*: "The child is the link

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through the parts, as is shown in the songs (inserted 1850) which are the best interpreters of the poem. . . . Before the first edition came out, I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs between the separate divisions of the poems; again I thought that the poem would explain itself, but the public did not see the drift."

Charles Kingsley wrote in 1850: "At the end of the first canto, fresh from the description of the female college, with its professoresses and hostleresses, and other Utopian monsters, we turn the page and —

'As through the land at eve we went

. . . . .

O there above that little grave,  
We kissed again with tears.'

"Between the next two cantos, intervenes the well known cradle song, perhaps the best of all; and at the next interval is the equally well known bugle-song, the idea of which is that of twin-labour and twin-fame in a pair of lovers. In the next the memory of wife and child inspirits the soldier on the field; in the next the sight of the fallen hero's child opens the sluices of his widow's tears; and in the last ('Ask me no more') the poet has succeeded in superadding a new form of emotion to a canto in which he seemed to have exhausted every resource of pathos which his subject suggested."

## IN MEMORIAM

"It must be remembered," wrote Tennyson, "that this is a poem, not an actual biography. It is founded on our friendship, on the engagement of Arthur Hallam to my sister, on his sudden death at Vienna, just before the time fixed for their marriage, and on his burial at Clevedon Church. The poem concluded with the marriage of my younger sister Cecilia. It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness. The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. . . . I did not write them with any idea of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many. The different moods of sorrow, as in a drama, are dramatically given, and my conviction that fears, doubts, and suffering will find relief only through Faith in a God of Love. 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking

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through him. . . . And as for the metre of *In Memoriam*, I had no notion until 1880 that Lord Herbert of Cherbury had written his occasional verses in the same metre. I believed myself the originator of the metre until after *In Memoriam* came out, when some one told me that Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sidney had used it."

The poem was commenced in 1833 at the time of the death of Arthur Hallam; it was not completed for seventeen years. As a result it gives, more clearly than any other poem of the century, the background of religious and scientific discussion, the doubt, the varying points of view of the time. When it was published, it was received by many of the contemporary scientists and theologians and philosophers as the great expression of the final triumph of faith over disbelief.

For an analysis of the poem into its structural parts, see Genung, *Tennyson's In Memoriam*, on which the following analysis is based:

## Prologue —

Written after the rest of the poem was complete, a summary of the whole, and Tennyson's restatement of his final position.

## Introduction —

Sections I-xxvii.

The arrival and burial of the dead.

I-VI. Prefatory to the mood of the whole.

VII-XVI. Period of waiting and consequent inquiry.

XVII-XX. Arrival and burial of the dead.

XXI-XXV. The past.

XXV-XXVII. Memory of Love.

## Part I.

Cycle of the Past. XXVII-LXXXVII.

Christmastide — Springtide — The first anniversary.

XXVIII-XXX. Christmas anticipated; Christmas present; Christmas past.

XXXI-XXXIV. Knowledge and faith.

XXXIV-XXXVIII. Reason and revelation.

XXXVIII-XXXIX. Springtide.

XL-XLVIII. Questions concerning the love beyond the grave.

XLIX-LIX. Questions and doubts concerning human life on earth.

LX-LXXI. Questions and doubts concerning the relation of the heavenly love to the earthly.

LXXII-LXXVIII. First anniversary of the death.

## Part II.

Cycle of the Present. LXXVIII-CIII.

Christmastide — New Year — Second Anniversary.

LXXVIII-LXXXIII. Christmas tide.

LXXXIII-XCIX. New Year.

New friendship; visit to Cambridge.

XCIX-CIII. Second anniversary of the death; farewell to old scenes and entrance upon new.

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## Part III.

- Cycle of the Future. CIV-CXXXI.  
 Christmastide — New Year — Birthday of Hallam — Springtide.  
 CIV-CVI. Christmastide.  
 CVI. New Year.  
 CVII-CVIII. Birthday of Hallam.  
 CIX-CXV. Personality of Hallam.  
 CXV-CXVI. Springtide.  
 CXVII-CXIX. The future.  
 CXX-CXXXI. Retrospect and Conclusion.  
 Epilogue — Marriage Song — General Conclusion.

## MAUD AND OTHER POEMS

- 197 **Maud.** Tennyson said: "This poem of *Maud or the Madness* is a little *Hamlet*, the history of a morbid, poetic soul under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir of madness, an egoist with the makings of a cynic, raised to a pure and holy love which elevates his whole nature, passing from the height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery, driven into madness by the loss of her whom he has loved, and, when he has at length passed through the fiery furnace, and has recovered his reason, giving himself up to work for the good of mankind through the unselfishness born of a great passion. The peculiarity of this poem is that different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters."

Aubrey de Vere wrote of it: "Its origin and composition were . . . singular. He had accidentally lighted upon a poem of his own which begins 'O that 'twere possible,' which had long before been published. . . . It struck him that to render the poem intelligible, a preceding one was necessary. He wrote it; the second poem too required a predecessor, and thus the whole poem was written, as it were, *backwards*."

- 206 **To the Reverend F. D. Maurice.** Written at the time that Maurice had been ejected from his professorship at King's College for non-orthodoxy.
- 208 **Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.** The word *ode* has been, as a rule, used loosely by English poets. Tennyson in this poem adheres more closely to the original idea than almost any other English poet. He follows Pindar in his use of the strophe form and in the development of the themes. This was one of the first poems written by Tennyson in his capacity as poet laureate. Although it is now recognized generally as one of his finest pieces of work, it was received coldly by the general public and most of the English critics.

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The development of themes is thus interpreted by Henry van Dyke, to whom Tennyson read the poem aloud in 1892:

"In the first two strophes the movement begins with a solemn prelude and the confused sound of a mighty throng assembling. The third strophe is the Dead March, with its long, slow, monotonous, throbbing time, expressed by a single rhyme recurring at the end of each line. The fourth strophe is an interlude; the poet, watching the procession, remembers the great Duke as he used to walk through the London streets, and recalls the simplicity and strength of his appearance and character. In the fifth strophe, the music is controlled by the repeated tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's cathedral, and then by the volleying guns, as the body is carried to the church. The strophe closes with a broad open movement which prepares the way like an 'avenue of song' for the anthem of strophes VI, VII, and VIII. It begins with a solo of three lines in a different measure, representing Nelson waking in his tomb and asking who it is that comes to rest beside him. The answer follows with the full music of organ and choir, celebrating first the glory of Wellington's achievements as a warrior, the value of his counsel and conduct as statesman, and then the unselfish integrity of his character as a man, closing with a burst of harmony in which the repetition of the word *honour* produces the effect of a splendid figure. A great silence follows, and the ninth strophe begins with a single quiet voice (Tennyson said, 'Here I thought I heard a sweet voice like the voice of a woman') singing of peace and love and immortality. The movement is at first tender and sorrowful, then aspiring and hopeful, then solemn and sad as the dust falls on the coffin, and at last calm and trustful in the victory of faith." (Van Dyke, *Poems by Tennyson*, p. 439.)

209 21. This picture Tennyson drew from his own memory. He had never met Wellington personally, though he had been given the opportunity to do so; he said that a man so great could not really care to be bothered with the idly curious; but upon one occasion when Tennyson was standing watching the Duke pass, Wellington turned and saluted his unknown watcher.

210 39. four-square. Tennyson himself recalls the word *τετράγωνος* which Simonides uses, though he said that he did not have it in mind when he wrote. Dante, in *Paradiso*, xvii, 24, uses the same figure when he says:

"io mi senta  
ben *tetragono* ai colpo di ventura."

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- 210 49. Wellington is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, on the top of which is a great ball and cross.
- 211 80 ff. Admiral Horatio Nelson, buried in St. Paul's in 1805.
- 212 99. Assaye. A village in India where Wellington in 1803 defeated the Mahratta army, ten times the size of his own.
103. affrighted Lisbon. The English and Portuguese under Wellington defended Torres Vedras from the French, October, 1810, to March, 1811.
123. that loud Sabbath. The day of Waterloo, Sunday, June 18, 1815.
- 213 137. shaker of the Baltic and the Nile. Nelson totally destroyed the fleet of Napoleon at the mouth of the Nile, August 2, 1798; in 1801 he crushed the naval power of Denmark.
- 214 188. Alfred was called *Ælfredus Viridicus*.
- 215 217. God is sun . . . *Revelation*, xxi, 23.
- 217 The Charge of the Light Brigade. The poem grew out of the line, "Some one had blundered." It was written after Tennyson read in the *Times* the report of the fatal charge of the Light Brigade, September 20, 1854, at Balaclava. The brigade consisted of the 13th Light Dragoons, the 17th Lancers, the 11th Hussars, the 8th Hussars, and the 4th Light Dragoons. In twenty minutes twelve officers were slain and four wounded; 147 men slain and 110 wounded. "It was magnificent, but it was not war."

## ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS

- 220 Northern Farmer. These two poems, the first dealing with the English farmer of Tennyson's youth, the latter with the farmer of his maturity, show Tennyson turning for the first time — and with unexpected success — to the use of dialect. The locality of the two poems is the same, and the dialect is that of Lincolnshire. The bailiff of the first one, proud of his "duty" to his "squire" has become the independent landholder of the second, with his continual emphasis on "proputty." Both of them were founded upon actual cases, though each developed from but a sentence. Tennyson's great-uncle told him of a farm-bailiff who, when he lay dying, said, "God A'mighty little knows what he's about, a-taking me. An' Squire will be so mad an' all." The other sketch is founded upon the sentence of a farmer of the neighborhood: "When I canters my 'orse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears 'proputty, proputty, proputty.'" Tennyson added: "I had been told

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that a rich farmer of our neighborhood was in the habit of saying this. I never saw the man, and knew no more of him. It was also reported of the wife of this worthy that when she entered the *salle à manger* of a sea-bathing place, she slapt her pockets and said, 'When I married, I brought him five thousand pounds on each shoulder.'"

- 220 13. Larn'd a ma' beä. Learned he may be.
- 221 16. Raäte. The poor tax.  
18. buzzard-clock. A cockchafer.  
30. Boggle. A ghost or goblin; same as *bogey*.
- 222 31. Butter-bump. Colloquial for bittern.  
32. Raäved and rumbled. Tore up and threw out.  
34. 'Enemies. Anemones.  
35. Toäner. One or the other.  
40. Yows. Ewes.  
42. Ta-year. This year.
- 223 61. The steam threshing machine was introduced in 1848.  
62. Huzzin'. Making a humming noise.  
Maäzin'. Frightening.
- 224 Northern Farmer — New Style.  
5. Craw to pluck. Proverbial for some trouble which must be settled.  
7. To weeäk. This week.
- 225 17. Stunt. Obstinate.
- 226 26. Addle. Earn.  
28. Ligs. Lies.  
31. Grip. A trench or gutter for draining a field.  
32. Far-welter'd yowe. An expression used of a sheep lying on its back in a furrow.  
39. Mays nowt. Makes nothing.
- 227 40. Bees. Lincolnshire for *flies*.  
Owt. Anything.  
41. Esh. Ash.  
52. Tued an' moil'd. Bustled and toiled.  
53. Beck. Brook.  
54. Feyther run oop. His property extended to —
- 228 On Translations of Homer. Tennyson considered that as a rule English hexameters could be used only for comic subjects.
- 228 Milton (Alcaics). Alcaics are lines in the measure invented by Alcæus, a poet of Lesbos, about 600 B.C. Tennyson said: "My alcaics are not Horatian Alcaics, nor are Horace's Alcaics the Greek Alcaics, nor are his Sapphics, which are vastly inferior to Sappho's, the Greek Sapphics.

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The Horatian Alcaic is perhaps the stateliest metre in the world except the Virgilian hexameter at its best; but the Greek Alcaic, if we may judge from the two or three specimens left, had a much freer and lighter movement; I have no doubt that an old Greek, if he knew our language, would admit Alcaics as legitimate, only Milton must not be pronounc'd *Milt'n*."

- 229 **Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad.** Tennyson notes: "Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest (Sir John Herschel) have endeavored to give us the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what seems to me their failure have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now, having spoken so disrespectfully here of these hexameters, I venture, or rather feel bound to subjoin a specimen (however brief and with whatever demerits) of a blank verse translation."

- 230 **The Higher Pantheism.** Written for the Metaphysical Society in 1869. Mrs. Tennyson in her journal wrote: "He talked much . . . about all-pervading spirit being more understandable by him than solid matter. He brought down to me his psalm-like poem 'Higher Pantheism.'" Hallam Tennyson reports that his father said at this time: "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real. . . . You never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me."

## BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

- 256 **Rizpah.** For the significance of the title, see 2 *Samuel*, xxi. This poem was first published in 1880 under the title of *Bones*. It was founded upon a paragraph which Tennyson read in a penny magazine, of a poor woman at Brightstone, whose son had been hanged for highway robbery. The mother went night after night to the spot, and was seen bringing back something in her apron. It was discovered that, as the wind and rain scattered the bones of her son, she kept them, and at night interred them in hallowed ground in the churchyard.

Swinburne wrote of the poem: "Never since the beginning of all poetry were the twin passions of terror and pity more divinely done into deathless words or set to more perfect and profound magnificence of music: never more

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inseparably fused and harmonized into more absolute and sublime identity."

- 262 **The Revenge.** The first line of the poem, *At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay* was upon Tennyson's desk for over two years. In March, 1872, Tennyson met in London the secretary of the Hakluyt Society who had collected information about Grenville for him. He wrote to his wife that it was "a tremendous story outrivalling Agincourt." The story as Tennyson tells it here is in the main founded upon Walter Raleigh's *Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of Azores this last summer* with some details also from Froude and Bacon.'

Tennyson read the poem to Carlyle from whom it drew the comment, "Eh! Alfred, you have got the grip of it," after which Tennyson repeated the story from Froude that the Spaniards told of Grenville — that he would carouse three or four glasses of wine and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them to pieces and swallow them down.

The situation upon which the poem was founded is the following: Sir Richard Grenville, a cousin of Sir Walter Raleigh, was in 1591 Vice Admiral under Lord Thomas Howard, in charge of the *Revenge* — the same ship in which Drake had sailed against the Armada three years before. At this time, it was one of a fleet sent out to intercept Spanish treasure ships from the West Indies. The English, with only six ships, were met off the Azores by a fleet of fifty-three vessels. Sir Thomas Howard escaped, but Grenville, who refused to leave before he had brought his sick on board, was attacked by fifteen of the largest vessels. The battle lasted fifteen hours, and all but twenty of Sir Richard Grenville's men were killed. He himself died a few days later from wounds received.

- 267 **101-03.** The dying words of Grenville, according to the account given in the *Discourse of Voyages of Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (1598) were these: "Here die I, Richard Greenfield, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do."

- 268 **The Defence of Lucknow.** Lucknow was one of the three important centers of the Sepoy Rebellion in which the native troops in India arose against their officers.

At the time that the poet's son, Lionel Tennyson, visited

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Lucknow, the old flag which had been used during the defence was hoisted, and the soldiers who still survived from the siege paraded in honor of the poet.

- 275 **De Profundis.** Begun upon the day of the birth of the poet's son Hallam. Cf. the lines which frequently occur in the *Idyls of the King*:

"Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he that knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Tennyson says in his notes: "At times I have possessed the power of making my individuality as it were dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, and the loss of personality, if so it were, seeming no alteration but the only true life."

## TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

The volume of *Tiresias and Other Poems* was dedicated: "To my good friend Robert Browning, whose genius and geniality will best appreciate what may be best and make most allowance for what may be worst." Browning had already dedicated a volume of his poetry:

"To Alfred Tennyson  
In poetry illustrious and consummate,  
In friendship, noble and sincere."

- 278 **To E. Fitzgerald.** Fitzgerald, the poet of "the golden Eastern lay," the *Rubáiyat of Omar Kháyyám* was one of Tennyson's lifelong friends. He died before the publication of *Tiresias*. Fitzgerald was a vegetarian, and Tennyson was persuaded by him to try the experiment of going without meat. He tells the result thus: "One of the most wonderful experiences I ever had was this. I had gone without meat for six weeks, living on vegetables; and at the end of that time, when I came to eat a mutton chop, I shall never forget the sensations. I never felt such joy in my blood. When I went to sleep I dreamed that I saw the vines of the South, with huge Eschol branches, trailing over the glaciers of the North."
- 286 **To Virgil.** Written at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death. There are many parallels between Virgil and Tennyson as poets — their patriotism, their attitude toward nature, and toward conventions, and their conscious artistry. The poem is filled with Virgilian reminiscences. Many of the expres-

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sions which Tennyson uses of Virgil might be used with equal justice of Tennyson himself. The references in the various parts of the poem are to different works of Virgil: the first stanza refers to the *Æneid*, the second ranks Virgil above Hesiod, the third refers to the *Georgics*, the fourth to the first and sixth *Eclogues*, the fifth to the fourth *Eclogue*, the sixth and seventh to the speech of Anchises in the sixth book of the *Æneid*.

- 288 **The Dead Prophet.** Tennyson said that this was about no particular prophet. He added:

"While I live, the OWLS,  
When I die, the GHOULS!"

- 291 **Frater Ave Atque Vale.** Written in 1880 when Tennyson and his son Hallam visited Sirmione, the peninsula on the Lago di Garda where the villa of Catullus had formerly been. This was to Tennyson the place of all he saw that he cared for most, probably because of his great affection for Catullus, whom, he said, he loved "for his perfection of form and his tenderness." Tennyson wrote to Gladstone, "Nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell, 'Ave in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.'" The reference in "Lydian laughter" is to Catullus' "O Lydiæ lacus undae, Ridete."

- 292 **Hands All Round.** The poem was set to music by Tennyson's wife. Recast in 1882, it was sung throughout the Empire on May 24, the Queen's birthday.

### LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

First published in 1886. Tennyson believed that the two Locksley Hall poems were the ones which would be most interesting to future generations, since they were descriptive of the tone of the age at two different periods of his life. Like the first *Locksley Hall*, it is a dramatic poem. Tennyson stressed again the fact that the characters were imaginary.

- 295 **13-16.** These four lines, Tennyson said, were the nucleus of the poem, written years before he thought of the poem itself.
- 298 **59-60.** These lines, with 71-72, Tennyson wrote at the death of his son Lionel.
- 300 **95. peasants maim.** A reference, Tennyson says, to the modern Irish cruelties.
- 303 **132 ff.** Cf. Plato, *Republic*, v, 473: "Until philosophers

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are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils, — no, nor the human race.”

307 185. Sappho:

“Oh, Hesperus, thou bringest all things home,  
All that the garish day has scattered wide;  
The sheep, the goat, thou bringest to the fold,  
Thou bringest the child, too, to the mother's side.”

308 201. *Psalms*, VIII, 5.

## DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS

318 **Merlin and the Gleam.** Hallam Tennyson comments on this poem: “For those who cared to know about his literary history he wrote *Merlin and the Gleam*. From his boyhood he had felt the magic of Merlin, the spirit of poetry — which bade him know his power and follow throughout his work a pure and high ideal, with a simple and single devotedness and a desire to ennoble the life of the world, and which helped him through doubts and difficulties to ‘endure as seeing Him who is invisible.’

“The first stanzas, therefore, tell of his youthful work; then was heard the ‘croak of the raven,’ the unsympathetic reviewers, and for a time ‘the light retreated.’ Still, however, he heard the inward voice. The inspiration of the poet was renewed and the period of his *Eclogues* and *English idylls* followed, during which he sang of the

‘Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ruddy faces  
Of lowly labour.’

“By degrees,” Hallam Tennyson goes on, “having learnt something of the real philosophy of life and of humanity from his own experience, he rose to a melody ‘stronger and statelier.’” At this time he began the *Idylls of the King*, which he had expected to be his chief work. Then, “clouds and darkness closed upon Camelot.” In the passage which follows, Tennyson unites Arthur Hallam with the Arthur of the *Idylls*. From the period of *In Memoriam* he emerges to find a “stronger faith than his own.” There follows the

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vision of death of the poet, now an old man, still following the Gleam.

322 **By an Evolutionist.** Hallam Tennyson says: "My father brought Evolution into poetry. Ever since his Cambridge days he believed in it."

324 **Far — Far — Away.** Tennyson himself wrote: "Before I could read, I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the wind and crying out, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind,' and the words 'far, far away' had always a strange charm for me." This poem was written after a severe illness in 1888









